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ABSTRACT

Unemployment wage data were evaluated to assess employment, job retention, and wage progression for graduates of Community Jobs (CJ), a short-term public job creation program for the hard to employ in the state of Washington. The following were among the findings: (1) 66% of all participants were employed after graduating from CJ; (2) 53% were employed at the end of the first year after graduation; and (3) participants' income increased while in CJ, and those employed a year after CJ had more than doubled their pre-CJ income. Among the results of surveys and focus group data from program participants, employers, and caseworkers collected to evaluate the quality and performance of CJ were the following: (1) over 90% of participants and supervisors felt positively about CJ; (2) 85% of participants reported that CJ had prepared them for work; (3) 39% of supervisors were concerned with participants' barriers to work; and (4) participants placed great value on self-esteem gained from CJ. The evaluation highlighted the need for increased job readiness training before participants reach work sites, more intensive assistance in the transition to unsubsidized work, and increased communication among stakeholders. (There are 29 figures and tables, and 54 footnotes and endnotes. The following items are appended: study methodology; wage data tables; survey forms; comparison of program participant experience and job prospects; focus group protocols; focus group attendance by location; and an outline of the scope of the CJ program.) (AJ)

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Community Jobs Outcomes Assessment & Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

The new era of welfare reform emphasizing the movement from welfare to work began in 1996 with the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The PRWORA abolished entitlements to public assistance, created Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)[1], and gave primary responsibility to the states to develop new methods of encouraging welfare recipients to work.

Community Jobs (CJ), a component of WorkFirst, Washington State's welfare reform, sets a precedent as the first and still the largest wage based public job creation program for "hard-to-employ" TANF recipients. The typical CJ participant is 30 years old, does not have a high school degree, is dealing with many personal issues such as domestic violence and lack of transportation, and has churned through the labor market holding past jobs for short lengths of time. In CJ, participants work 20 hours a week, earn a paycheck for hours worked and receive one-on-one support and mentoring to resolve barriers to work. Program participants work in CJ up to nine months. CJ is intended to provide valuable work experience and training to move individuals out of poverty, create public jobs, and benefit communities. The Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED) first implemented CJ in June 1998.

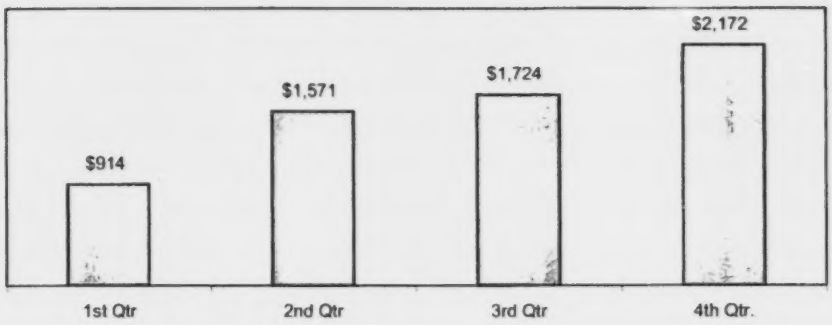
The Economic Opportunity Institute and the Northwest Policy Center began collaborating on a program outcomes assessment and evaluation in January 2000 to understand this unique program's progress toward achieving its goals. Unemployment insurance (UI) wage data was collected to assess employment, job retention, and wage progression for individuals leaving the Community Jobs program. Surveys and focus group data were collected to evaluate the quality and performance of the most significant components of CJ through feedback from key stakeholders: program participants, CJ contractors, DSHS case managers, and worksite supervisors.

Outcomes Assessment

Due to limited education, poor work history and difficult family situations the majority of CJ participants had no real opportunity to find and keep work prior to their involvement in Community Jobs. Following participation in CJ, the wage data confirm that significant numbers of program participants have worked, continue to work, and move up a wage ladder.

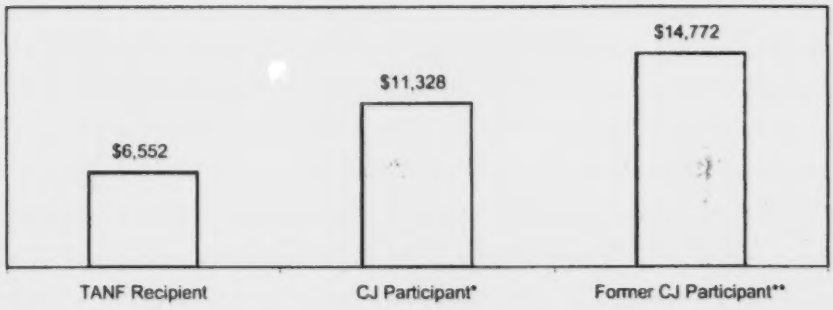
- 66% of all participants find employment after leaving Community Jobs.
- Of those who completed their CJ experience a year or more ago:
    - 76% find employment in the first two quarters after leaving Community Jobs
    - 53% are employed in the 4th quarter after leaving Community Jobs.
- Graduates begin to move up an income ladder with earned income increasing in each successive quarter of employment. Median earned income in the 4th quarter is 137% higher than the median earned income reported in the 1st quarter of employment.

CJ Wage Progression
Median earned income for each quarter of work post CJ



- Overall annual median earned income for participants after CJ is 18% higher than annual median earned income reported for all WorkFirst participants in the WorkFirst Study,[2] although CJ participants began with fewer job skills.
- Participants' income increased while in CJ, and those employed a year after CJ had more than doubled their pre-CJ income.

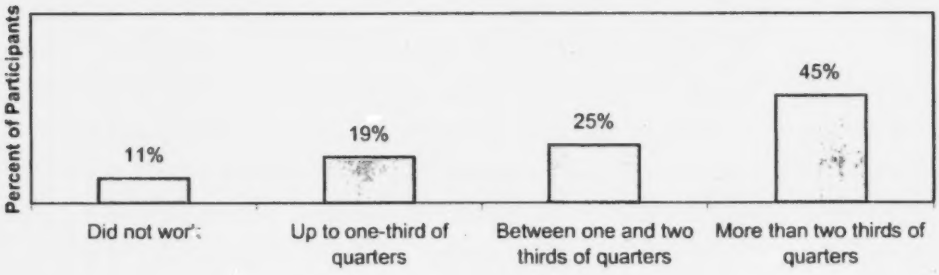
Community Jobs - Average Annual Income Comparison



*includes average CJ wages, average EITC, and an earnings disregard on TANF assistance
**annualized 4th qtr. average wages, average EITC, and an earnings disregard on TANF assistance

- While two thirds of participants have found jobs after CJ, not all have worked continuously. Of those who concluded their CJ experience a year or more ago, about half worked at least two-thirds of the quarters since leaving CJ and 30% worked in each of four consecutive quarters.

Proportion of quarters of workforce attachment post CJ
by participants who could have worked for at least one year



Evaluation

Overall, survey and focus group results demonstrate that CJ helps participants prepare for unsubsidized work. Participants, and worksite supervisors consistently identified the job experience and skill building provided by worksites as the main benefit of the program. The mentor-like relationship between CJ contractors and participants is also a valuable CJ component. In particular, DSHS case managers reported that the paid component of CJ provided a great incentive for the population. They also stated that a supportive, structured workplace was necessary for participants to succeed.

Both participant and worksite supervisor survey results were highly positive. Key findings include:

- Over 90% responded that they would like to continue with this same type of work after CJ, and nearly 90% of participants rated their overall CJ experience positively.
- Over 90% of supervisors agreed that program participants added value to their organization.
- 75% of participants surveyed felt that their contractor was working with them to provide a quality employment experience.
- 85% percent of worksite supervisors and 85% of participants reported that CJ had helped prepare participants for work during their time at the worksite.
- 39% of worksite supervisors raised issues relating to lack of job readiness skills and participant barriers to work and only 9% identified technical or "hard skills" as their concern about participants.
- 45% of participants reported having a job lined up as they left the program. 85% of participants reported that their CJ contractor or worksite supervisor had helped them search for a permanent job.

Participants placed great value on the self-esteem, skills, and knowledge gained from the program. Comments from the surveys included:

- "(CJ is) helping me to find my independence and self-esteem, after getting myself and child out of an abusive situation."
- "This experience gave me the experience, self-confidence and self-esteem that I needed."
- "It got my children used to mom working."
- "I've learned a lot about office work and I feel without this program I would have no knowledge or experience."

This evaluation has shown that the main areas where CJ could be strengthened include the need for increased job readiness training before participants reach the worksite and more intensive assistance in the transition to unsubsidized work. Participants, supervisors, and case managers also reported the need for more communication between different stakeholders.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The data collected for this report suggest that participants gain personal and long-term employment benefits from Community Jobs. Although these data show that people value work, they also clearly show the complications of resolving the employment issues that previously prevented these individuals from keeping a job. Reviewing all of the data in this evaluation, it is clear that this already valuable program can be significantly improved.

Recommendations to more fully achieve program goals include:

1) Provide ongoing hands-on job readiness training and vocational skills training within the context of the work experience.
2) Strengthen and refocus services in the last three months of CJ to support participant preparation and transition to unsubsidized employment.
3) Implement a retention services component that continues to provide some level of support and follow-through for CJ graduates in unsubsidized employment.
4) Create a permanent evaluation system to support continuous improvement.

Introduction

The new era of welfare reform emphasizing the movement from welfare to work began in 1996 with the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The PRWORA abolished entitlements to public assistance, created Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)[3], and gave primary responsibility to the states to develop new methods of encouraging welfare recipients to work. States implemented a variety of stick and carrot programs to achieve a drop in welfare caseloads, presumably the result of increased permanent employment for former TANF recipients.

Community Jobs (CJ) is a component of WorkFirst, Washington State's welfare reform.[4] Community Jobs is a wage-based public job creation program for "hard-to-employ" TANF recipients. When the Community Jobs program began implementation in June 1998 it was the first program of its kind in the nation and one of the more novel attempts in Washington to assist individuals facing multiple barriers to employment[5] to move from welfare to work.

Community Jobs provides temporary paid work experience plus training opportunities for hard to employ TANF recipients. The Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED) administers Community Jobs. Community Jobs operates statewide and participants are referred from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to one of 17 community-based CJ consortia directly serving individuals around the state. Program participants work for community based nonprofit, government, education and tribal organizations. Participants work 20 hours a week, earn a paycheck for hours worked and receive one-on-one support and mentoring to resolve barriers to work. Program participants work in CJ up to nine months. During this time participants can access vocational and work readiness training designed to enhance their abilities to retain and advance in permanent unsubsidized employment after graduation from Community Jobs. CJ participants receive income above typical welfare grants.[6] Participants earn Washington State's minimum wage of $6.50 per hour, receive a 50% earnings disregard[7], and are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Community Jobs sets a precedent as the first and still the largest TANF related public job creation program in the nation. CJ is a model that was intended to provide valuable work experience and training to move individuals out of poverty, create public jobs, and benefit communities. Therefore, it is important to understand the model's ability to achieve these goals.

In January of 2000 the Economic Opportunity Institute began collaborating with the Northwest Policy Center to develop an outcomes assessment of the Community Jobs program. This assessment was designed to understand program outcomes as well as develop and test a tool for continuous improvement that the Office of Trade and Economic Development could use to regularly gauge program quality. Unemployment insurance wage data was also collected to assess employment, retention, and wage progression outcomes for individuals leaving the program. Surveys were developed and distributed to worksite supervisors and participants after they had been in the program six months and at the time participants exited the program in order to capture qualitative program performance data. The evaluation also included information from

focus groups of case managers of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Community Jobs worksite supervisors, and Community Jobs participants.

Using qualitative and quantitative data, this document evaluates Community Jobs program quality, assesses participant outcomes in moving from welfare to work, and provides recommendations for enhancing the program and determining its viability as a replicable model of work, training, and support to advance low-income workers.

Community Jobs Program Overview

In order to place WorkFirst participants in Community Jobs, OTED contracts with 17 community-based consortia, including three tribes, to provide direct Community Jobs services across the state. Contractors include Workforce Development Councils, Community Action Agencies and other nonprofit community organizations. The consortia work closely with other WorkFirst agencies and particularly DSHS.

DSHS case managers provide participant referrals to Community Jobs contractors who then engage, assess, and provide support services to participants while developing an appropriate worksite placement for the individual. CJ design emphasizes close support and mentoring for CJ participants and also regular communication and support between worksite supervisors and DSHS case managers.

Community Jobs contracts are based on performance: contractors' payments for services (pay points) are directly linked to specific measures of performance that are structured to achieve the goals of the program.[8] Specific components include: in-depth assessments to understand barriers to employment and career interests, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that CJ participants create with their CJ contractor for use as a personal and career/training plan during and after their experience in Community Jobs, and a six month IDP review to make changes as needed and begin the process for modified job search at month seven of the CJ experience. CJ jobs can last up to nine months

Participants are required to work a minimum of 20 hours per week. They are paid the hourly minimum wage, receive a 50% earned income disregard on their regular TANF grant, as do TANF recipients in unsubsidized jobs, and are eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit. Wages are derived from TANF reinvestment funds through the TANF block grant.[9]

Community Jobs participants are often simultaneously enrolled in community college training, Welfare-to-Work services, and other activities designed to improve the participant's job market value[10]. Many Community Jobs participants face multiple barriers to employment, including mental and/or physical health issues, learning disabilities, drug or alcohol abuse, limited education and work history, transportation, child care, and domestic violence.

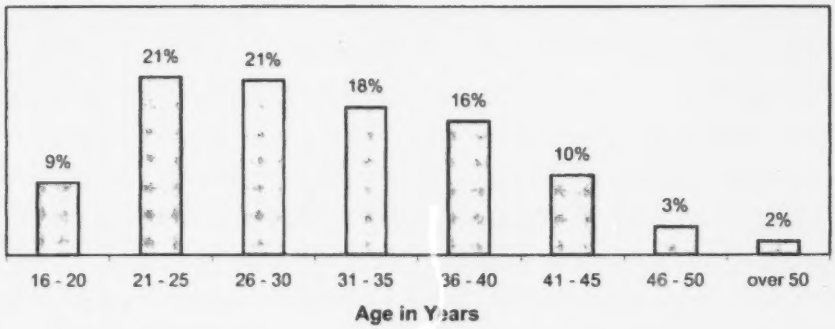
An example of a Community Jobs partnership is the Puget Sound school bus driver-training program. This program provides participants training and experience while meeting a critical need in the community for school bus drivers. Participants first receive training for their commercial driver's licenses. They are then placed at a Community Jobs worksite as apprentice bus drivers. Graduates are qualified to drive buses or vans for school districts, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance (ECEAP) programs, colleges, medical facilities, corporate campuses, and delivery services. Wages for these positions range from $8 to $15 an hour.

Phase I of Community Jobs began in June 1998 as a pilot program serving participants in 12 counties of Washington State. Phase II expanded the program statewide in July 1999. As of July 2000, a total of 3404 individuals had participated in Community Jobs.

Selected participant demographics

Information on every participant enrolled into Community Jobs is entered into the CJ Management Information System (MIS) database. This database provides an overall picture of participants in the Community Jobs program.[11]

Ages of all Washington CJ Participants



About three-fourths of participants are between the ages of 21 and 40. Only 5% of participants are over the age of 46 and 9% are 20 years old or younger. The median age for CJ participants is 30 years old.[12] This is also the median age for the WorkFirst population.[13]

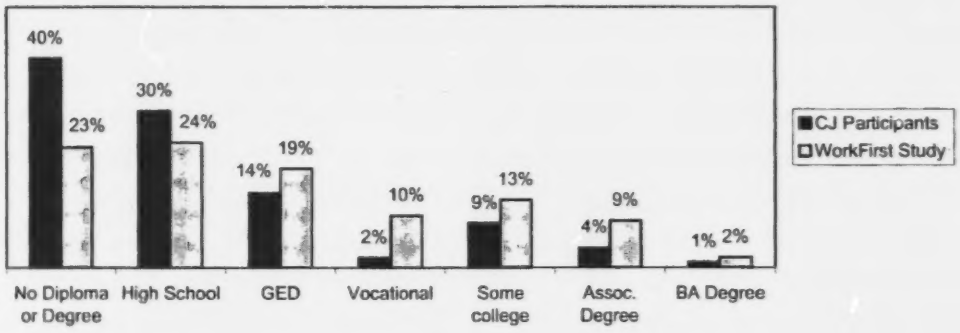
Most CJ participants are considered "hard to employ", meaning that they face multiple barriers to work. These barriers include:

- significant lack of work experience
- adult or child health issues
- drug or alcohol abuse
- learning or physical disabilities
- lack of job skills
- limited education
- legal issues
- domestic violence
- childcare, housing, transportation issues
- poor workplace behaviors

These barriers, and many others, make it difficult for this population to find, get, and keep jobs.

Limited education is one characteristic barrier for many CJ participants. Forty percent of participants do not have a high school degree or GED. Fourteen percent of participants have at least some college experience, with only 1% of participants holding a 4-year college degree. Only 2% of participants have vocational/technical training.[14]

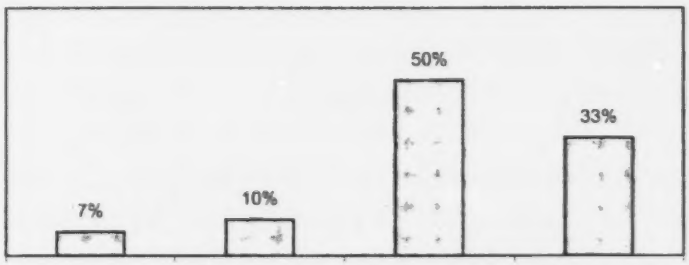
Highest Educational Level for CJ and Workfirst



The preliminary report of a study of Washington TANF recipients found that 23% of WorkFirst participants surveyed did not have a high school degree or diploma.[15] Therefore, the proportion of CJ participants without a high school degree is higher than the total Washington population of TANF recipients. The WorkFirst study also had higher proportions of respondents who reported vocational training (10%) or at least some college (24%) compared to CJ participants.

One of the most difficult barriers faced by the hard-to-employ population is a lack of work experience. Although most of the survey questions focused on program performance, one survey question specifically asked CJ participants about their past work history.

Surveyed CJ Participants' Work History



Percentage only includes question respondents

The highest proportion of participants reported that they had worked a few different jobs for short lengths of time. A third of participants reported working continuously, and only 7% reported never having worked. The survey did not include questions about their occupations or wages at past jobs that may also identify barriers for this population.

Outcomes

The Community Jobs program is designed to provide participants the job experience and training they need in their first step to find and keep unsubsidized employment and move towards family wage jobs.[16] In order to measure these program outcomes, it is necessary to track participants' employment patterns after they leave the program.

Post-CJ quantitative employment data was provided by the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system.[17] The UI data consisted of the wages and number of jobs reported for each quarter worked after a participant left CJ.[18] Analysis of post-CJ employment status, number of jobs held, and wages for these participants on a quarterly basis were used to assess three main program outcomes:[19]

- Employment
- Wage progression
- Job retention

This assessment included participants from the Phase I CJ contractors. As CJ is a nine-month program, only these five contractors had been in operation long enough to graduate participants who could have worked for a full year after leaving the program. These five contractors represent both rural and urban areas with varied regional economic trends and employment opportunities.[20] The participant data from these five contractors, therefore, provide a wide distribution of individual backgrounds.

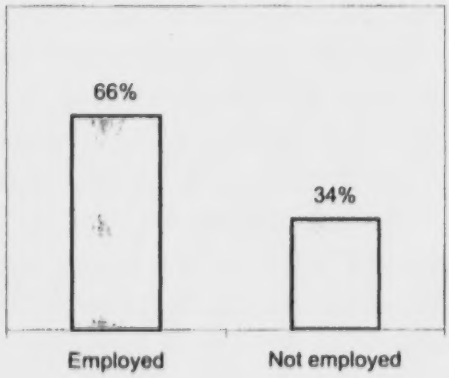
These five Phase I Community Jobs contractors submitted information for the 1406 participants that exited their CJ programs from the start of the program in July 1998 through August 2000. Of this group, 922 were matched in the UI system.[21] The UI system incorporates a two-quarter lag in reporting. Therefore, UI data was not available for participants that exited the program after March 2000 and these recently exiting participants could not be included in this assessment.[22]

Employment

Overall, Community Jobs moves a significant number of "hard-to-employ" individuals into work. Sixty-six percent of all participants found work after leaving Community Jobs, the same rate as for the whole WorkFirst population.[23]

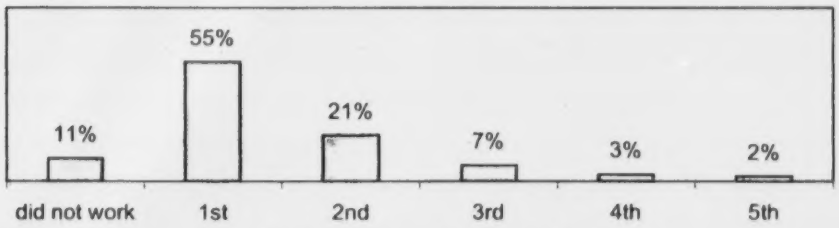
Of those who worked, 73% held one job and 27% held more than one job. Given the structure of UI quarterly wage reports, the data do not show whether or not multiple jobholders worked multiple jobs simultaneously, or if they left one

Post-CJ Employment



job and took another during a quarter. It may also be that individuals worked different jobs from quarter to quarter but that information could not be obtained from the available data. In any case, a large majority of participants (76%) who could have worked at least one year do begin work immediately or soon after exiting Community Jobs.[24]

First Post-CJ Quarter of Employment
for participants who could have worked at least one year



Wage Progression

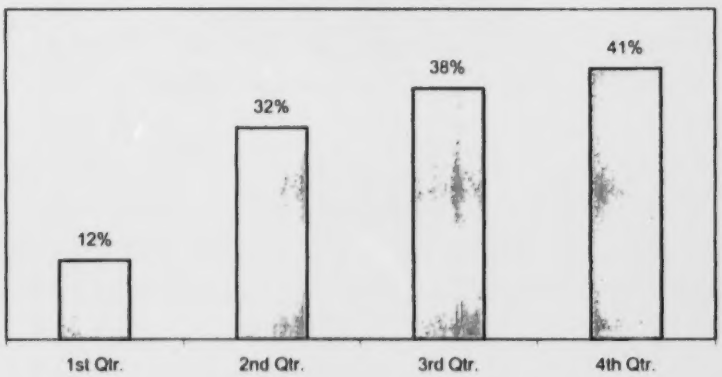
Wage data shows program graduates gradually move up an income ladder with median and mean wages increasing in each successive quarter of employment: by the 4th post-CJ quarter, the total median earned income is 137% higher than it was in the first quarter after CJ, while the total mean earned income is 79% higher.[25] The following table shows both the median and mean earned income for participants in the first through the fourth quarter of employment. The lower earned income in the first quarter may be partially due to the limited amount of time an individual could have worked in the same quarter of exiting CJ compared to full quarter of work in the second quarter after exiting the program.

	1st Qtr. Employment Post CJ	2nd Qtr. Employment Post CJ	3rd Qtr. Employment Post CJ	4th Qtr. Employment Post CJ
Mean Earned Income	$1285	$2028	$2106	$2318
Median Earned Income	$914	$1571	$1724	$2172

Based on these first four quarters of employment, the annual median earned income for CJ is $6381. This is 18% higher than annual median earned income for WorkFirst participants reported in the WorkFirst Study. According to the WorkFirst study, general WorkFirst participants self-reported an annual median earned income of $5409.[26]

Wage progression is also related to continuous employment. WorkFirst designated earnings of $2500 or more for four consecutive quarters as a performance standard for job retention. The percent of post-CJ participants that earn $2500 or more per quarter increases with each quarter of post-CJ work. By the fourth quarter of work 41% of individuals are earning above $2500 per quarter.

Percent of Participants Earning Above $2500 per Quarter After Leaving CJ



Given that this population began as "hard-to-employ" with poor education and very limited work history, evidence of consistent wage progression is significant. However, the incremental increases suggest that a great deal of time or some other type of assistance is necessary in order for program graduates to begin earning family wages.

Job Retention

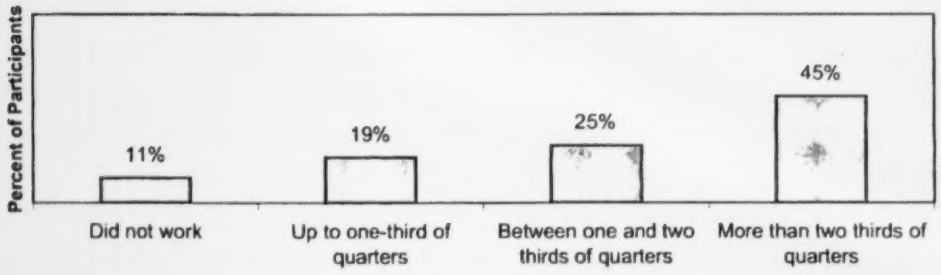
Because CJ has been in operation for only two years and participants spend nine months in the program, job retention could only be measured for this report based on the experience of a small number of participants.[27] The experience of the first CJ enrollees suggests that job retention needs improvement.

Of those who could have worked for one full year or more, only 30% of individuals retained employment for four consecutive quarters. The other 70% of individuals either did not work or worked fewer consecutive quarters, left the workforce briefly, and then returned. A majority of participants who could have worked for a year or more (76%) begin work in the first and second quarters after leaving CJ and over half of participants (53%) are working in the 4th quarter after leaving the program.

The graph below shows the distribution of how much time individuals worked of those individuals who could have worked four or more quarters.[28] The graph shows that even though participants may not have worked consistently during the time they could have worked, nearly

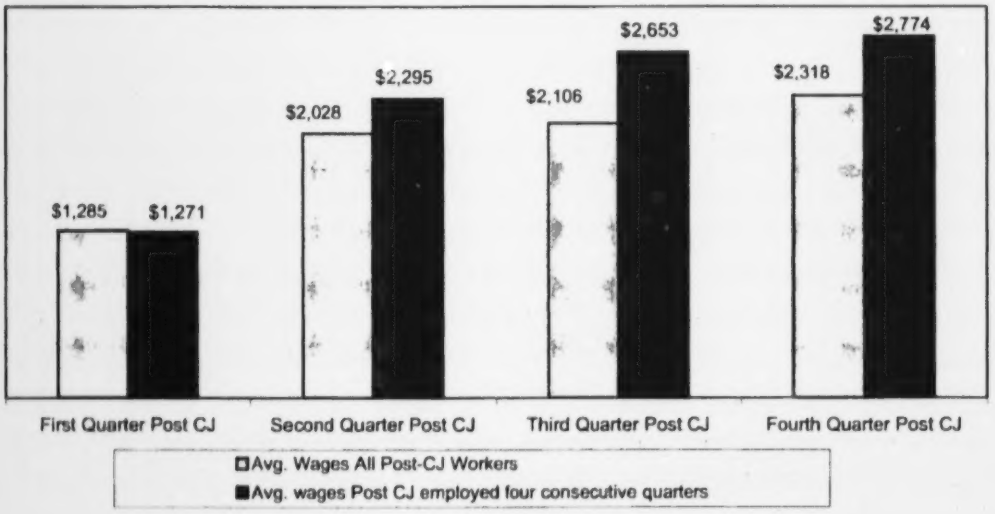
half of them did work a majority of the time after they left Community Jobs. This number suggests progress for a population of individuals that have had difficulty sustaining employment.

Proportion of quarters of workforce attachment Post CJ
by participants who could have worked for at least one year



Not surprisingly, individuals who worked more consecutive quarters earned a higher income than those who moved in and out of the labor force. Average earned income for each quarter of employment was higher for post CJ individuals working at least for consecutive quarters than overall average earned income post CJ.

Comparison of Average Earned Income per Quarter
for Post CJ Workers Employed at least Four Consecutive Quarters
and All Post CJ Workers



Survey and Focus Group Findings

Surveys and focus groups were designed to evaluate the quality and performance of the most significant components of CJ.[29] Through these two different methods, key stakeholders provided their unique perspectives within the following program areas[30]:

1. Overall CJ experience
2. Worksite performance
3. Program structural issues
4. CJ contractor performance
5. Suggestions for improvement

Surveys: In total, 125 CJ participants and 136 worksite supervisors responded to the survey. The surveys included two types of questions designed to gather qualitative information about worksite supervisor and participant experiences with CJ:

1. Specific, closed-ended questions with a defined list of four or five answers from which to choose, which focus the respondent on answering questions about a particular aspect of a CJ component. [31]
2. Open-ended questions for comments, which allow the respondents to answer broader questions about CJ components in whatever way they choose.

Surveys were received from 13 of the 17 contractors (77%). While these findings may not be representative of all of the CJ participants and supervisors they do provide an important look at how these supervisors and participants view key CJ components.[32]

Focus groups: A total of 13 focus groups were held over 5 months. Within the focus groups, participants, supervisors and DSHS case managers were able to have a conversation about their experiences with CJ. Although there were specific questions asked within each group, this more flexible and interactive dynamic elicited a different type of qualitative information than what was gathered through surveys. This is particularly true for the focus groups conducted with DSHS case managers because these stakeholders did not complete surveys.

The focus group strategy was designed to gather qualitative data from key CJ stakeholders who operate in diverse areas throughout the State.[33] Six focus group sites were selected as a representative mix of Phase I and Phase II CJ contractors, smaller and larger sites, and rural and urban areas.

1. Overall CJ Experience

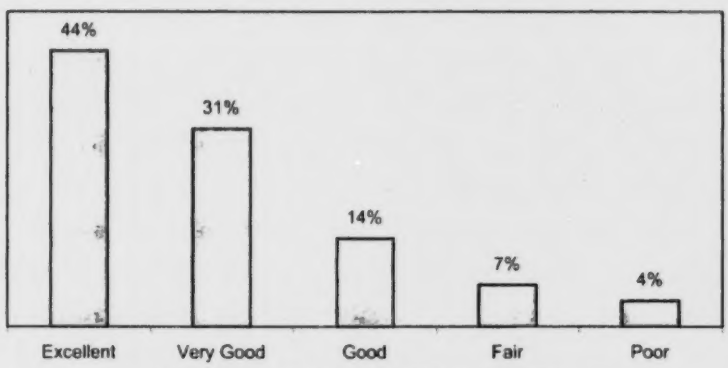
Overall, focus group and survey results demonstrate that CJ is a beneficial program that helps participants prepare for unsubsidized work. Nearly 90% of participants found the program to be a good to excellent experience. The job experience and skill building provided at worksites were consistently identified as main benefits of the program. The mentor relationship between CJ contractors and participants was also recognized as a key CJ component.

The main criticisms of CJ related to program structure. Participants, supervisors, and case managers reported the need for more communication between different stakeholders. They also clearly identified the need for increased job readiness training before participants reach the worksite and more intensive assistance in the transition to subsidized work.

In general, the surveys showed consistently positive responses to all CJ components, while focus groups elicited a mixed evaluation of key areas. This is particularly true when comparing the results of supervisor surveys and supervisor focus groups. Overall, the focus group findings supported the survey results. The face-to-face interactions, however, often intensified the emotions that accompanied the conversation. This dynamic can make both criticism and support appear stronger than what is found within a written survey

Surveys Participants were asked both to rate their overall CJ experience and to offer comments on what they liked during their time with CJ. Overall, three-fourths of the participants surveyed reported having an excellent or very good CJ experience and 11% reported having a fair or poor experience. There was no discernable relationship between how participants rated their overall experience and whether or not they had a job lined up when they left CJ.[34]

Participant Rating of CJ Experience

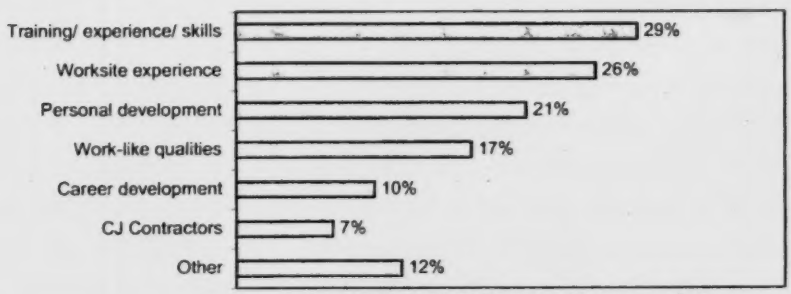


Percentages only include question respondents

When specifically asked to comment on what they *liked* about their CJ experience, 79% of participant respondents chose to comment and identified several factors related to their worksite experiences.

- The highest proportion of participants reported that they liked the training, experience, and skills they had learned through CJ at their worksite.
- About one-quarter of participants related specific aspects of their worksite that they had liked, such as "wonderful coworkers" or valuable mentoring at the worksite.

What Participants Liked About CJ



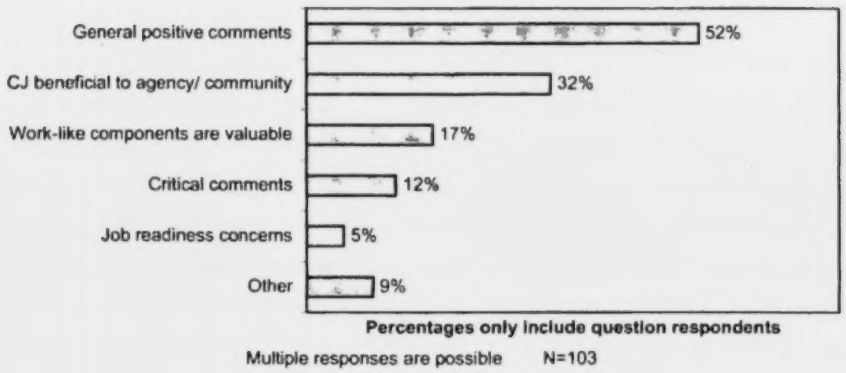
Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=99

- 21% focused on the ways that they had personally developed during this experience: most cited improved self-esteem, providing comments like this: "This experience gave me the experience, self-confidence and self-esteem that I needed."
- 17% of participants commented on the work-like qualities of the program. These participants noted the value of having a paid position, a work schedule, or preparation for a permanent job. Many of these participants shared specific examples of how this work-like experience helped prepare them, such as: "It got my children used to mom working."
- Career or job development was favorably mentioned by 10% of participants and the mentoring and one-on-one help of CJ contractors by 7%.

Worksite supervisors were also asked to comment on the CJ program: 76% of supervisors surveyed chose to respond, with over half of this group reporting a variety of general positive comments about the program. Main themes of their comments included how helpful CJ contractors had been, how "great" supervisors thought the CJ program was, and how valuable CJ was for self-esteem building. About a third of the supervisors specifically stated that CJ was beneficial to their agency and community or was mutually beneficial for the agency and the participant.

Worksite Supervisors' Overall Comments About CJ



Seventeen percent of supervisors identified the value of the work-like components of CJ, often focusing on the fact that work skills, experience with a paycheck, and transitional time were necessary for participants to succeed in the work world. These supervisors offered comments such as: "Great program. Gives the participant hands on experience in the workforce. They get the training needed to succeed in life."

Supervisors also offered some critical feedback for CJ through their comments. A small proportion of supervisors reported concerns about the job readiness and life skill preparation of participants, stating that these issues resulted in attendance problems. Some supervisors felt that these issues should be worked on before participants are placed at the worksite. Twelve percent of supervisors offered a variety of other critical comments that included concerns about communication with CJ contractors and suggestions for changes to the CJ program structure.

Focus Groups

Overall, DSHS case managers thought that the program was valuable and that the paid component of CJ provided a great incentive for participants. They also stated that the supportive, structured work environment was necessary for participants to succeed. One supervisor stated that the CJ program provides "a light at the end of the tunnel instead of plodding along in the system." Case managers' main frustrations included the difficulties associated with the hard-to-serve population, time lags and lack of communication with contractors, and unclear program structure. Some case managers thought that CJ should focus more strongly on self-esteem building, and on better determining who is most appropriate for the program.

Overall, supervisor focus groups agreed that CJ was a valuable and beneficial program. Worksite supervisors described many CJ success stories that reflected participants' growing skills and self-confidence. This seemed to be the most rewarding aspect of the program for supervisors. Supervisors had incorporated CJ participants into their worksites in various ways and with different levels of satisfaction. One of the most frustrating aspects of the program was confusion about what the role of worksites: are they training centers, worksites, or community

support programs? Most supervisors also clearly stated the need for added pre-training or life skills training designed to help participants prepare for the worksite.

The participants in focus groups represented a wide range of backgrounds and current CJ positions. Overall, participants valued the experience and training that CJ offered. They related many personal examples of the invaluable help provided by CJ contractors and worksite supervisors. Their one-on-one examples were often contrasted with more frustrating experiences with DSHS case managers. Many participants suggested changes for CJ, primarily recommending that CJ last longer and include more job search or transitional assistance. Their most common frustration with the program was lack of communication around certain key issues, such as availability of support services.

2. Feedback on Worksite Performance

The job experience and skill building that occur at worksites are key benefits of CJ. As contacts and decision-makers at the worksite, supervisors play a pivotal role in the participant's worksite experience. In order to evaluate the worksite component of the program, feedback was gathered from three groups of key stakeholders: participants, worksite supervisors, and DSHS case managers.

- **Participants** were asked questions about their worksite experience that focused on skill building and career development, their satisfaction with the work they are doing, and their relationship and opinion of their worksite supervisor.
- **Worksite supervisors** were asked about the participant's value to the worksite and communication levels with the participant.
- **DSHS case managers** were asked about worksites ability to prepare participants for work and their perception of worksite quality.

Feedback from Participants

Participant surveys: Most of the participants surveyed reported gaining valuable job experience at the worksites. When participants were asked to choose from a list what aspect of CJ had been most valuable the top two overall choices were specifically related to their experience at the worksite: 60% chose job experience and another 46% chose the help and advice of site supervisors and coworkers.[35]

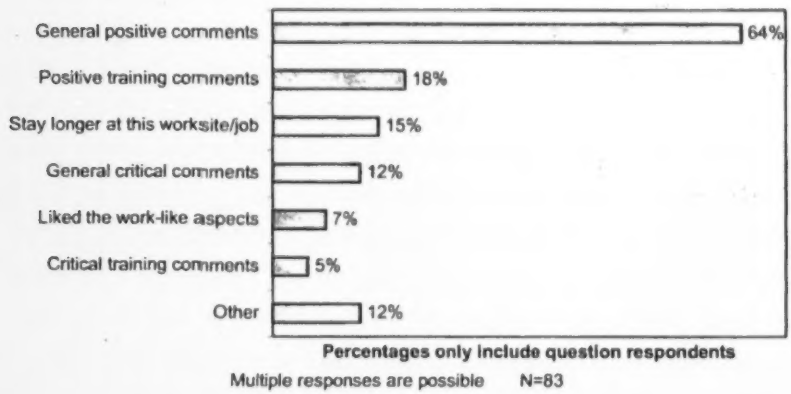
Participants also responded positively to more specific questions about their worksite experience. Three-fourths of participants reported that their supervisors often or very frequently provided them with opportunities to learn new skills. A similar percentage reported working on half or more of the Individual Development Plan goals intended to guide their skill development (76%).

Not only were participants learning new skills, their development was occurring in occupations that interested them. Over 90% of participants responded that they would like to continue in the type of work they were doing. In addition, similar proportions of participants reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their current job and job duties.

Written comments from 66% of participants about their CJ worksite were also highly positive. The highest proportion of these participants gave a variety of positive comments. The main themes of their comments included how "wonderful" people were at the worksite, that they "liked" their work, and that it was a fulfilling or rich experience.

In addition, 18% of participants noted the positive training aspects of the worksite, specifically commenting on what a great opportunity it had been to develop new skills. A smaller proportion of participants also commented specifically that they would like to stay at their job longer and that they appreciated the work-like experience of the worksite and CJ. One participant reported: "I've learned a lot about office work and I feel without this program I would have no knowledge or experience."

Participant Comments About Their Worksite and Job



Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=83

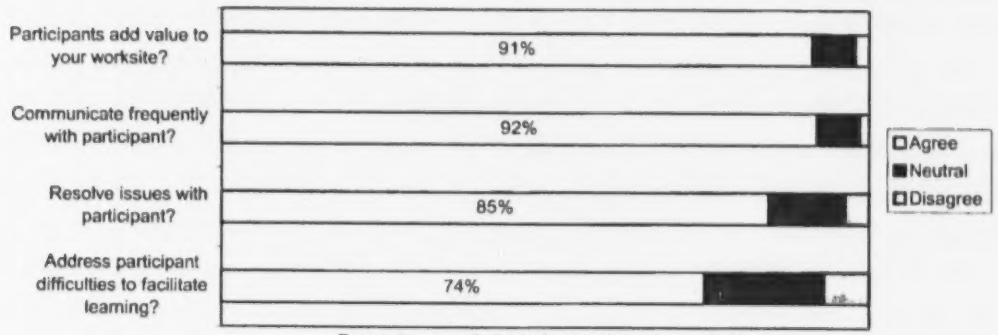
Participants also offered critical comments about their worksites, such as preferences for a different kind of work or frustrations that there was not enough to do at the worksite. A small proportion, 5%, identified frustrations with the training opportunities available at the worksite.

Participant focus groups: Focus group comments confirm survey findings. Participants commented favorably on increases in their self-esteem, opportunities for skill development, and the assistance they were given in finding a permanent job. Participant focus group results also indicated that worksites were going the extra mile to help participants achieve career goals. One participant specifically praised her supervisor for the extra effort and extensive time she had taken to provide support and counsel in addition to what was required of her as a supervisor. Negative comments centered on a poor relationship with a supervisor or being assigned to a type of job they did not like at their first worksite from participants who had been re-assigned to a second worksite.

Feedback from Worksite Supervisors

Supervisors' surveys: Worksite supervisors presented a primarily positive view of how CJ participants had been incorporated into their worksite. Over 90% of supervisors agreed that participants had added value to their organizations. About a third of supervisors who commented about the overall CJ program specifically stated either that participants were beneficial to their agencies, or that the program was mutually beneficial for both parties, such as: "Every participant has been able to participate and add value to our organization, no matter their skill level. We enjoy the opportunity of additional help while developing an employee for the workforce."

Worksite Supervisors Feedback on Participants at their Worksite



Percentages only include question respondents

Over 90% of worksite supervisors reported that they had frequent communication with their participants. Over 85% of supervisors reported that they were adequately able to resolve issues with the participant. Three quarters of supervisors agreed that participant difficulties at the worksite or in their personal lives were quickly addressed to facilitate learning in the workplace.

Supervisor focus groups: The mutually beneficial nature of CJ was also a main theme of supervisor focus groups. Comments ranged from a belief that CJ participants definitely added value to an organization to a sense that these participants often needed more guidance and supervision than other employees. Even in those situations, supervisors are often personally motivated to help people trying to break into the labor force, and benefited in a personal sense from helping their CJ participants discover a path to success. One supervisor remarked, "I was aware that it would take some additional time/energy, but somebody needs to help these people and I feel an obligation to do so." Another supervisor commented that observing a participant blossom "into a really great individual" was a very rewarding process.

Feedback from DSHS Case Managers

DSHS focus groups: In most cases, DSHS case managers did not have close relationships with the worksites, relying on the CJ contractor to fulfill this role. Their comments about worksites, therefore, were infrequent and often based on second-hand information from the contractor or participant. Overall, case managers perceived CJ as a valuable program, due in large part to the help of worksite supervisors. One focus group in particular was pleased with the range of worksites available.

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3. Program Structure

In order to evaluate program structure, the CJ experience was divided into three main segments: the time before the participant reaches the worksite, the participant's time while at the worksite, and the participant's experience post-CJ. Participants, worksite supervisors, and DSHS case managers were asked about the completion of program goals during these three sections.

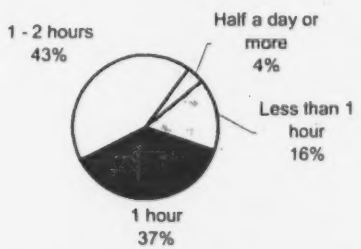
- **Before reaching the worksite:** Questions focused on the process of participant assessment, referral, and preparation for the worksite.
- **While at the worksite:** Surveys and focus groups evaluated the relationships among participants, contractors, and supervisors during this time, participant skill building and work experience, and aspects of CJ that were most helpful to participants.
- **Post-CJ:** Stakeholders were asked about the participants' readiness for work and job search process. Participants were specifically asked if they had found a job and what other support or skills they needed to be successful.

Before Reaching the Worksite

Surveys: Once she is referred to CJ, a participant's first step in the program is meeting with her CJ contractor. Nearly half of the participants reported that this first meeting lasted longer than an hour. Of these participants, a very small percentage reported meeting for a half-day or all day.

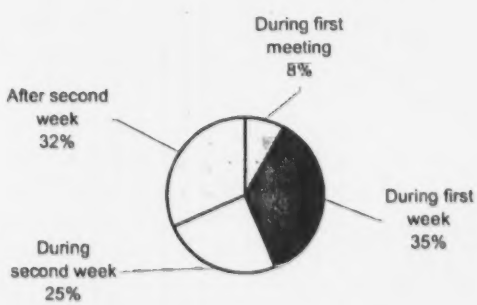
Over a third of participants met with their contractor for about one hour. The remaining 16% of participants reported meeting with their contractor for less than one hour.

Length of First Meeting



Percentages only include question respondents

Time until First Work Day



Percentages only include question respondents

After participants meet with their CJ contractor and are assessed, the contractor places the participant at a worksite: 42% of participants reported that they began working within one week of meeting with their contractor. About one-quarter of participants began working during the second week and about one-third of participants began working after the second week.

When a worksite does not appear to be the best "fit" for a participant, a second referral may be made: 28% of

participants surveyed reported that they were referred to another CJ worksite before they came to their current worksite. Participants offered a variety of reasons for leaving their first worksites, such as insufficient training or that the work was not what they expected.

After participants were placed at their current worksites, 82% of worksite supervisors agreed that participants were matched well with their organization and 80% of participants were satisfied with their current job.

When supervisors were asked for suggestions about how to improve CJ, they highlighted three pre-placement areas that needed improvement.[36] About one-quarter of the supervisors reported that participants needed more job readiness and life skills training in order to succeed at the worksite. On supervisor stated that: "Self-esteem and personal growth areas need to be addressed prior to expecting many of the CJ participants to succeed. " Another cited the need for basic job skills: "Basic work ethic trainings – instill importance of being on time, following a schedule, leaving personal problems at home, for example." Technical or "hard skill" training was identified as a concern by 17% of supervisors, many suggesting pre-placement, work-specific skill development. Eight percent of supervisors focused on the need for better assessment and placement for participants.

Focus groups: As DSHS case managers are the group who refer participants into CJ, they were in a unique position to comment on the referral process. It was clear from their discussions that there is no standard approach to CJ referrals, despite the guidance provided to CSOs by DSHS WorkFirst officials in Olympia. Referral systems vary from careful reviews of individual cases to determine the best type of placement to sending entire sanction lists to the CJ contractor with no individual attention. In addition, Community Service Offices (CSO) have instituted a variety of policies about who is appropriate to refer to CJ, including referring all harder-to-serve participants, only those who fail job search, and/or primarily those with limited work experience.

The most common concern for case managers was the gray period between referral of a participant to a contractor and communication indicating that the participant has been accepted by the contractor and placed in a job. This was especially frustrating if case managers later discovered that participants had not been engaged for several months.

Within the worksite supervisor focus groups, there were two main criticisms of the referral and placement process. First, many supervisors stated that they would like to have more information about Community Jobs participants at the point of referral. Specific issues mentioned included barriers, disabilities, educational levels, previous work experience, resumes, skills/aptitudes, drug/alcohol issues, and relevant safety issues.

Second, some supervisors indicated that CJ participants seemed to be poorly matched with jobsites, given the particular career goals and skills of these participants. Supervisors in at least one focus group felt that the contractors inappropriately tended to make placements solely on the basis of participant aspirations or just the availability of an open site, without sufficient attention to the skills and aptitude of certain participants. These inappropriate placements created difficulties for both the worksite and the participant.

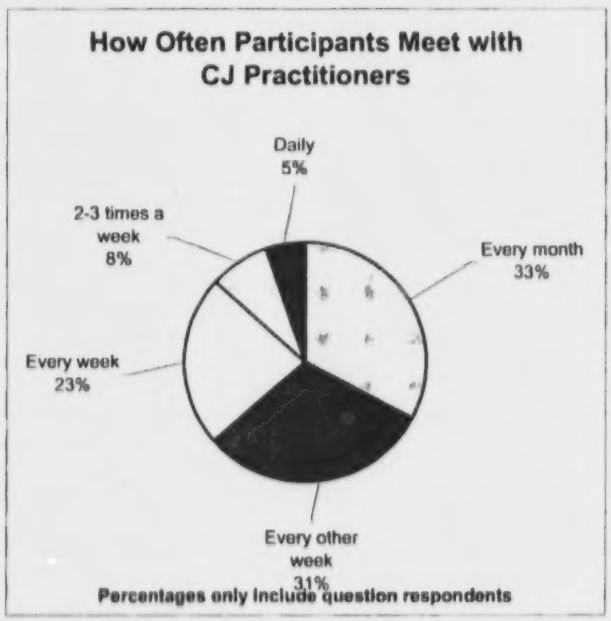
Supervisors also focused strongly on the need for pre-training or life skill training designed to help participants prepare for the worksite. They felt that this training needed to come before participants reached the worksite so that they would be more able to learn job-specific skills and perform their duties.

While at the Worksite

CJ participants spend an average of 8 months at their worksite.[37]

Surveys The surveys focused on the following main areas of the worksite experience: frequency of participant meetings with their CJ contractors and worksite supervisors, satisfaction with the communication between all groups, effectiveness of participant's plans for skill development, and most helpful aspects of CJ.

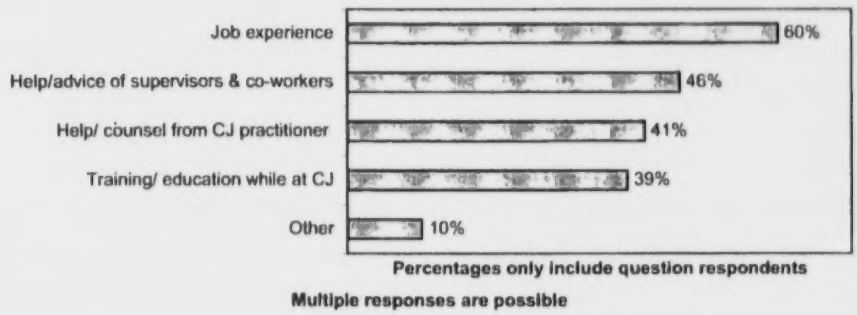
Participants continue to meet with their CJ contractor throughout their time in CJ. About two-thirds of participants met with their contractor at least every other week. A small proportion, 13%, reported meeting more than once a week. A third of participants reported meeting with their contractors monthly.


How Often Participants Meet with CJ Practitioners
Daily 5%
2-3 times a week 8%
Every month 33%
Every week 23%
Every other week 31%
Percentages only include question respondents

Before placement, participants and CJ contractors work together to design the Individual Development Plan (IDP) that guides their skill development while on the worksite. About three-fourths of participants (76%) agreed with their IDP, while 7% disagreed with the plan. Seventy-six percent of participants also reported working on at least half or more of their IDP goals during the first six months of the program. Twenty-two percent of participants reported only working on a few of their IDP goals.

When participants were asked to choose which aspect of CJ was the "most helpful" from a list of CJ components, over half the participants who answered picked more than one aspect (54%). Participants' top two choices were both worksite-related: 60% selected job experience and 46% selected the help and advice of supervisors and co-workers. A slightly lower proportion of participants chose the help and counsel of their CJ contractor as the most helpful aspect, and 39% selected their training or education program while in CJ.

Most Helpful Aspects of CJ According to Participants



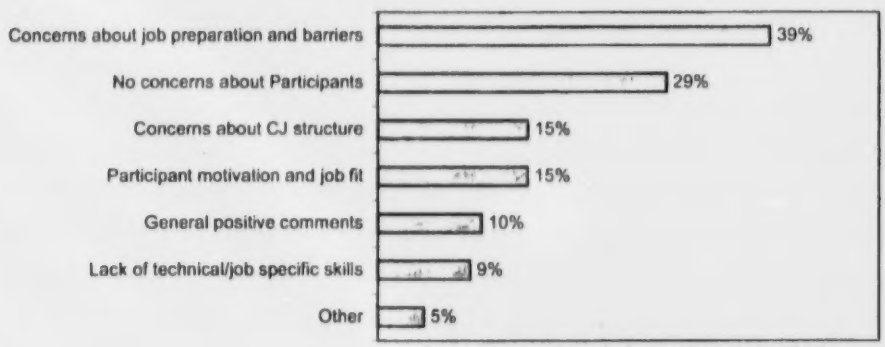
Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible

Some participants chose to describe an aspect of CJ that was not on the list of choices. Their comments varied widely, often including personal experiences. One participant shared that the aspect of CJ she found most helpful was: "Helping me to find my independence and self-esteem, after getting myself and child out of an abusive situation."

When supervisors were asked about their concerns regarding participants, 64% offered comments. Nearly 30% of supervisors who commented stated that they had no concerns about CJ participants. In addition, 10% offered positive comments, describing participants who were hard working, very motivated, and/or well-matched to the agency, such as: "[Our CJ participant] has worked very hard to meet the expectations of the job. She has progressed in the skills building area rapidly."

Worksite Supervisor Concerns about Participants



Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=87

Nearly 40% of supervisors identified issues relating to lack of job readiness skills and participant barriers to work. In comparison, only 9% of supervisors identified technical or "hard skills" as their concern about participants. In particular, supervisors commented that these barriers

contributed directly to participant attendance issues. One supervisor specifically stated concerns about "attendance due to family, medical and personal (car) problems." Supervisors also reported a lack of motivation on the part of some participants, which resulted in poor job performance. Many supervisors believed that poor participant motivation was because of "bad job fit" for the participant.

Focus groups Overall, worksite supervisors recognized the benefit of participants to their worksites and found the growth in participant self-esteem to be personally rewarding. Supervisors incorporated CJ into their worksites in diverse ways. Finding a balance between mentoring/training and work was an ongoing process for nearly all supervisors. Some worksites instituted career ladders and mentoring programs. Many of these supervisors stated that the "upfront training time really pays off." Others treated participants as "real" employees without any special support. These supervisors described a philosophy of "tough love" necessary for participants to succeed in the work world post CJ.

Many supervisors, describing interactions with unions as they incorporated CJ at their worksites, stated that union concerns had limited what participants could do but also that there were benefits of trained participants becoming union members.

Worksite supervisors expressed frustration with the lack of clarity about their role within CJ. They wanted a clear distinction between the roles of worksite supervisor and CJ contractor and training on how to perform their role. In particular, many supervisors would like to have more information on how to supervise participants. They suggested group worksite meetings as a valuable method for sharing experiences with their peers. There was also confusion about some applications of worksite policies for CJ participants, such as drug testing.

Most supervisors expressed frustration with the lack of communication about the support services and educational/training opportunities available to participants. They were unsure about how to deal with reoccurring issues such as transportation, childcare, benefits, domestic violence, clothing, travel, and health care. Supervisors' responses to the participants' need for support varied widely from "we are not a social service agency" to "we knew what we were getting into when we signed up." Some supervisors organized peer support groups for their participants and advocated on their behalf. Other supervisors did not want "to hold participants' hands" and wanted the CJ contractors to more clearly explain support services to participants.

A few supervisors specifically recognized the support they had received from their CJ contractors. One supervisor noted, "How many places get you boots and overalls to go to work, will buy tools, etc.? CJ will get you what you need - nowhere else will do that."

Participant focus groups directly echoed the survey findings. Participants reported being highly appreciative of the work experience they received through CJ. They also described many instances of worksite supervisors who "went the extra mile" to help and train them. Participants' most common complaint about their worksite experience was a lack of communication about the support services available to them.

DSHS case managers did not have a great deal of feedback to offer about the worksite experience as they were not as frequently involved with participants during this period of time.

Post CJ

Surveys Both worksite supervisors and participants were asked about the participants' readiness for work after leaving CJ. Eighty-five percent of worksite supervisors agreed that the combination of work skills learned at their site and the additional training prepared participants well for unsubsidized work. Eighty-five percent of participants also thought that their CJ experience had helped them to get ready for work.

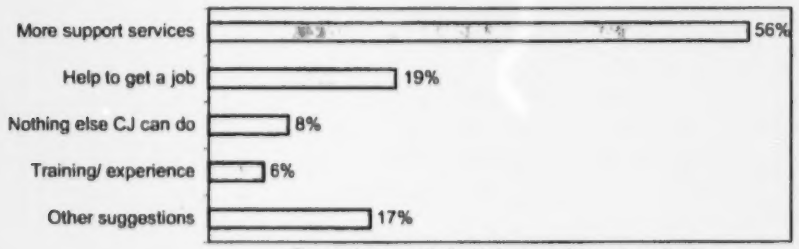
Although 85% of participants reported that their CJ contractor or worksite supervisor had helped them "in quite a few ways" or "very often and thoroughly" to search for a permanent job, less than half of exiting participants (45%) reported having a job lined up as they left the program. Two-thirds of exiters, however, reported that they had a plan and necessary child care and/or transportation help to get to a permanent job once they left. When specifically asked if they would like to continue the type of work they were in, 90% of participants stated that they would.

Both participants and supervisors specifically identified increased job search and a longer CJ program when they were asked to write suggestions about how to improve CJ.

- 40% of supervisors who offered suggestions commented that they would like to see CJ structural changes, primarily increased support for the transition to unsubsidized work and a longer CJ program if the participant needed the increased experience.
- Participants' most frequent suggestion for improvement was a longer CJ experience (22%). Fourteen percent of participants also specifically stated that they wished their CJ placement could become a permanent job.

In addition, 53% of exiting participants responded when asked what else CJ had not offered to them that they needed to be successful.

Participants Identified Post-CJ Needs for Successful Employment



Percentages only include question respondents
Multiple responses are possible N=36

Many of those respondents echoed the improvements already described, such as the 20% of exiters who stated that they needed help to get a permanent job. The most frequent concern of

exiting participants, however, was the need for more support services, particularly transportation help.

A small percentage of exiting participants identified the need for more training or experience. Seventeen percent of those who responded offered a variety of comments including their personal plans to get jobs or other specific worksites they would like to see included in CJ.

Focus groups There was no clear consensus within any of the focus groups about the best length of time for CJ. Participants, DSHS case managers and supervisors all reported very mixed reactions to the designated nine-month length. Many people indicated that there is no universal answer to this question, citing the fact that CJ participants are enormously varied in terms of their prior job experience, current barriers to employment, education, and job-specific skills.

A number of DSHS case managers expressed an interest in having the option to stay engaged with selected participants for a longer period of time, feeling that at least some portion of their caseload is unlikely to succeed in the workforce after only nine months of intensive assistance. Many worksite supervisors also believed that participants needed an extension to gain the job skills necessary for a "good salary" and to "fully deal with their baggage".

Most DSHS case managers stated the need for a clear progression between CJ and unsubsidized employment. They believed that this disconnect was a shortcoming of the CJ program. Case managers also detailed a prevailing change in program expectations – from the belief that CJ would offer a permanent job to the knowledge that it was a stepping stone. Case managers reported a range of success with post-CJ hiring and retention. Case managers in one area reported that participants always seem to leave CJ with a permanent job. Other case managers reported significant differences between contractors in the job search support that was offered.

Many worksite supervisors stated that they would like to hire qualified participants post-CJ, but did not have the funding to do so. They also saw CJ as a step toward full employment and stressed the need for more job search help for participants near the end of the nine-month period. They described participants' "home life" and lack of life/job readiness skills as the most significant barrier to employment.

4. Feedback on Contractor Performance

The CJ program relies on the 17 CJ contractors to be the hub for all information, case management, and support services throughout the nine-month CJ experience. This requires CJ contractors to work directly with worksite supervisors, participants, and DSHS case managers during this period of time. CJ contractors are a variety of consortia across the state including three tribes, Workforce Development Councils, Community Action Agencies, and other nonprofit community organizations. Responses from all stakeholders indicate that contractors have performed well.

Worksite supervisors and CJ participant feedback on contractor performance was gathered through surveys and focus groups:

- **Worksite supervisors** were asked about contractors' ability to provide them the specific information and support necessary to be a part of the program. They were also asked about their perception of CJ contractors' preparation and support for participants.
- **CJ participants** were asked questions about contractors' abilities as mentors and case managers, including questions about communication, interactions, support levels, and overall performance.

DSHS case manager feedback on contractor performance was gathered through focus groups across the state:

- **DSHS case managers** were asked about their interactions and communication with contractors. As entry into the CJ program requires a case manager referral, their feedback particularly helped in evaluating the referral and assessment process.

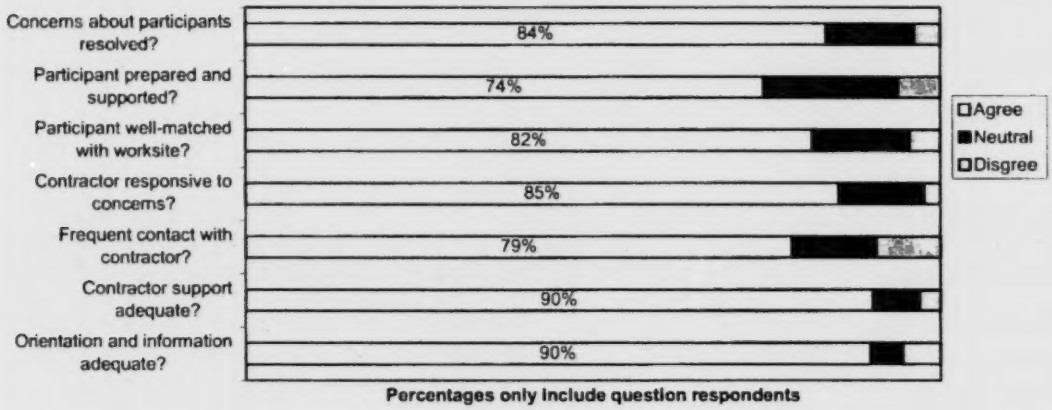
Feedback from Worksite Supervisors

Supervisors' surveys: Supervisors were asked specific questions about how CJ contractors prepared, supported and communicated with their worksite and with participants. Overall, they responded very positively to each of these questions: at least 74% of worksite supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that CJ contractors were performing their duties. Nine percent of supervisors disagreed or strongly disagreed that contractors were performing their duties.

Specifically, 90% of supervisors surveyed reported that they had received adequate support from their CJ contractor. A similarly high number of supervisors also agreed that they had been adequately oriented and informed about CJ when beginning as a worksite and that the contractor responded quickly to their concerns. Over 80% of supervisors agreed that participants had been well matched with their organization.

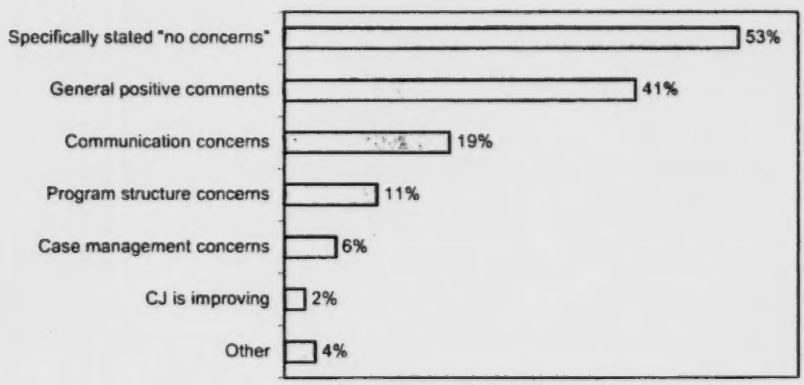
Supervisors also chose to give comments about CJ contractors when answering several open-ended survey questions. Most of these written answers supported the trend of positive feedback about CJ contractors that is described above.

Worksite Feedback about Contractor Performance



When specifically asked to share their "concerns" regarding CJ contractors[38], 61% of all supervisors chose to write comments. Over half of this group said that they had no concerns. In addition, 40% of supervisors gave positive comments, citing how responsive, cooperative, available and helpful contractors had been. One supervisor stated: "We have had no concerns – the CJ contractor has always been very accessible by phone and interested in the participant placement and success of that position. We have had one-on-one contact regarding the participant with the contractor and this has always been very positive." When supervisors were asked to write overall comments about CJ, many also had positive feedback about CJ contractors. Of those who responded, 41% described positive experiences or program attributes and often related positive comments about their particular CJ contractor.

Worksite Supervisors Concerns about CJ Contractors



Multiple responses are possible N=83

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Supervisors also offered critical feedback about CJ contractors. When asked about their concerns, 19% cited a lack of communication or contact with CJ contractors. Specifically, these supervisors reported the need for more routine conferences about participants, miscommunication about the expectations of a worksite, and a lack of response to requests for information. Supervisors reported similar concerns when they were asked to write suggestions for how to improve CJ. About 11% of supervisors reported a variety of concerns with a CJ program structure area, such as the orientation and training for worksite supervisors.

A small percentage of supervisors reported frustrations with the lack of intensity or effectiveness of current case management. Suggestions for improving case management included increased site visits and more coordination with other WorkFirst services.

Supervisor focus groups In focus group discussions, supervisors described a wide range of interaction and communication experiences with CJ contractors, from very positive to very critical. In part, this range of responses could be due to the individual dynamics that developed within each focus group.

Some supervisors expressed satisfaction with "case managers" (CJ contractors) and felt that they were responsive, supportive, and timely. A number of worksite supervisors felt that they had strong relationships with contractor staff and that the contractors worked closely with CJ participants in a mentoring and problem-solving mode.

Most supervisors who participated in focus groups, however, stated that they did not have enough communication with CJ contractors to support the needs of participants. Specific concerns included infrequent contact and long lags in returning phone calls. Several supervisors stated that they had no in-person contact with CJ contractors and did not see them again once the participant had been placed. Overall, supervisors did not agree on a preferred communication style, with suggestions ranging from only telephone contact to frequent site visits.

Supervisors also indicated that they felt poorly prepared for the roles they assumed as CJ "worksite supervisors". A number of supervisors indicated that the orientation they received consisted of little more than a handbook or manual describing the CJ program. Few of the supervisors were able to distinguish CJ "interns" from other DSHS clients sent to their workplaces under alternative funding/programmatic arrangements such as DSHS Work Experience (WEX), Workforce Development Council Welfare to Work programs, or Americorps.

Many supervisors also expressed frustration with the perception that the current reporting system was not efficient or effective, citing excessive paperwork and lack of follow-up. They wanted to be able to share information about the participant with the CJ contractor on a regular basis. Supervisors stated that regular contact would facilitate solving the participant's ongoing issues and barriers. In addition, supervisors shared a perception of too much pressure on CJ contractors to simply "place" participants, without regard to whether or not the worksite was a good fit. Overall, supervisors requested more uniformity of program implementation with CJ contractors.

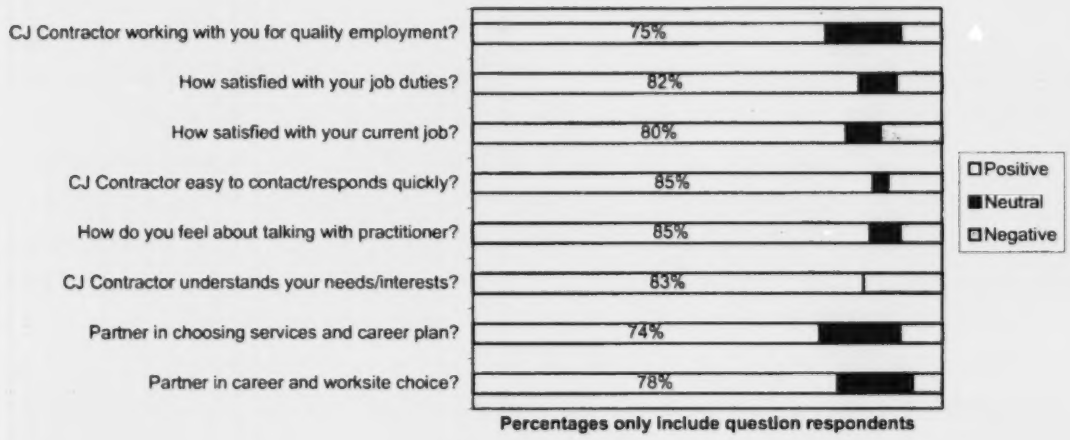
Feedback from Participants

Participant surveys Overall, the participants surveyed gave very positive responses to specific questions about their interactions and relationship with CJ contractors. Three-fourths of participants surveyed felt that their contractor was working with them to provide a quality employment experience, while only 9% thought that this was "not at all" or "very slightly" occurring.

Participants reported positive communication and supportive interactions with their contractors. Over 80% of participants surveyed felt that their contractor understood their employment and personal needs and interests[39]. A slightly higher percentage reported that their contractor was easy or very easy to talk to.

Over 85% felt that their contractor was usually or always easy to contact and responded quickly to their needs. When asked to choose which aspect of CJ was the most valuable from a list of CJ components, over 40% of participants selected the "help and counsel" provided by their CJ contractor.[40]

Participant Feedback on Contractor Performance



Participants also responded positively to survey questions about planning for their CJ experience with their CJ contractor. Nearly three-fourths of participants felt that they had been a partner in creating their Individual Development Plan (IDP) and determining appropriate support services. A slightly higher percentage felt that they had been partners in choosing their career interests and worksites. Over three-fourths of participants surveyed agreed with most or all of their IDP intended to guide their CJ experiences, while 7% of participants disagreed with their IDP.

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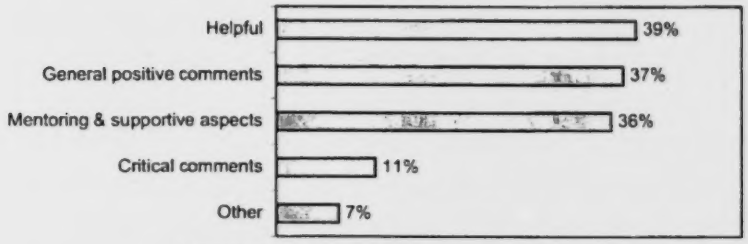
Participant Comments about their CJ Contractor



Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=75

When asked in an open-ended question to write comments about their CJ contractor, 60% of participants responded with primarily positive feedback. Nearly 40% of respondents specifically stated that their contractor had been helpful or a valuable problem solver. Similar percentages of respondents highlighted more personal qualities, citing that their contractor was "very nice" or "good at what they do." Just over a third of participants reported mentoring and supportive aspects of their interactions with a contractor, for example: "She really helped me a lot and encouraged me to stick with my job and not give up when I was in tough situations. So I thank her very much." In addition, about 7% of answering participants identified their CJ contractor as what they liked about their CJ experience, citing the value of one-on-one help.

A small percentage of participants, 11%, gave negative feedback when asked to comment about their CJ contractor. Their written comments focused on a variety of issues, including frustrations that the CJ contractor had "pried into" their life or was too busy to give them enough attention.

Participant focus groups: Within the two focus groups participants reported more mixed opinions about interactions with CJ contractors. One of the main participant criticisms was lack of communication with CJ contractors. Specifically, some participants reported that interaction with the contractors was much less frequent than desired. In order to deal with this frustration, one site organized a participant support group as a way to relieve pressure on staff time. Conversely, other participants spoke very positively about communication with their contractors, describing how they had formed very positive and lasting relationships.

Overall, focus group discussions did not provide as positive a report of the planning and placement process as did the surveys. Some participants felt that the program was driven by a need to place participants quickly, no matter what might be their long-term career goals. One participant described how difficult it was to get removed from an initial placement that did not work out well and be re-assigned to another worksite. Another participant felt that her long-term career goals were not being advanced by her particular placement, and she remarked that her CJ contractor indicated that substantial skill development was needed before this she would achieve her goals.

Some participants in these discussions, however, distinctly noted the difference in their ability to make decisions in the CJ program compared with WorkFirst Job Search. In one focus group, participants described severe personal circumstances preventing participation in Job Search; these participants noted that they had been sanctioned for non-participation despite their personal issues. These same participants described a much more collegial working relationship with their CJ practitioners than they had experienced with other WorkFirst staff.

Feedback from DSHS Case Managers

DSHS focus groups: DSHS case managers were quite frank about the value of CJ contractors as well as the perceived shortcomings in contractor performance. Many of the case managers complaints involved the frequency and manner of communication about the status of participants. Although they expressed the need for different levels of communication, nearly all case managers stated an overall lack of communication. There was no agreement, however, on an appropriate level of communication. Some case managers requested only periodic written communication; others expected frequent phone calls. A few were interested in very intensive communication at certain points, such as when participants need to re-engage in job search, but were pleased with less frequent communication at other times.

Despite these complaints, many case managers related cases of CJ working for participants when all other programs had failed. They were grateful to contractors who had provided necessary mentoring and access to support services, such as counseling and training. The complaints of case managers were outweighed by an overall sense that the program was working quite well.

DSHS case managers reported a variety of experiences with referral to the program and subsequent placement at worksites. Some case managers related positive working relationships with contractors and a smooth referral process. A common frustration, however, was the lengthy lag time between referral to the contractor and placement at a worksite. Many case managers described situations in which they did not know what was going on with their participants during this lag time and therefore could not be supportive. Some stated that once they had referred a participant to a contractor, they did not hear any more about them.

5. Suggestions for Improvement

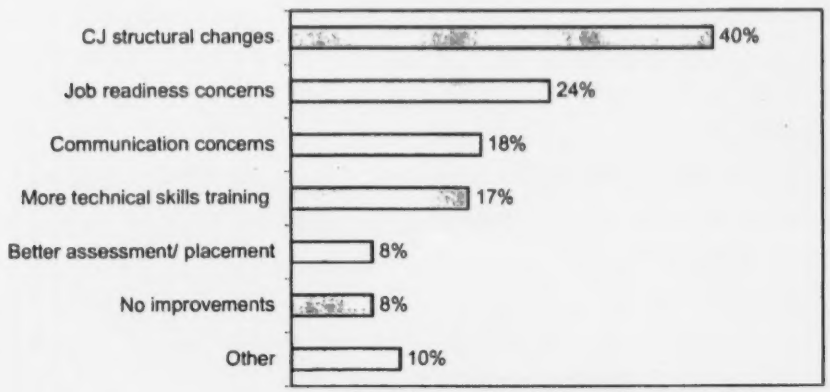
This program evaluation was designed to serve as a continuous improvement tool for the CJ program. Within the surveys and focus groups, the stakeholders in the field were asked how they would like to see CJ improve. Their main suggestions focused on various structural and communication issues, support services, increased job readiness training, and more intensive job search assistance.

Surveys

Over half of the worksite supervisors (57%) chose to offer suggestions for CJ improvements. The highest proportion of supervisors focused on CJ structural changes, such as more help with the transition to permanent jobs or a longer CJ work experience if necessary.

They also identified two main areas of concern about participants: about one-fourth identified the need to address participant job readiness skills pre-placement and 17% reported the need for more technical or job-specific skills training. Suggestions for CJ contractors included improving communication with participants and supervisors and better assessment and placement of participants. A small percentage of supervisors specifically stated that there were no improvements necessary.

Worksite Suggestions for CJ Improvements



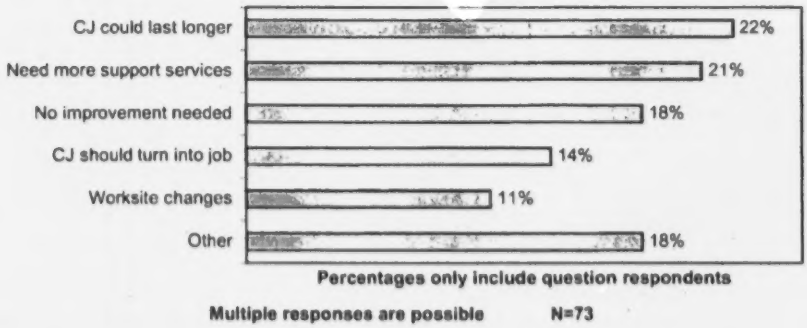
Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=78

A similar proportion of participants (58%) chose to write their ideas on how to improve CJ. Two suggestions focused on post-CJ issues: 20% wanted CJ to last longer for more job experience and 14% wanted CJ to turn into a permanent job.

Participants also identified the need for more support services and changes at the worksite, with increased training and education as the main concern. Other suggestions for improvement reflected on the desire of participants to make personal changes of their own that would have strengthened their experience.

Participant Suggestions for CJ Improvement



Percentages only include question respondents

Multiple responses are possible N=73

Focus groups: All three groups of stakeholders were asked about suggestions for CJ improvement within the focus groups.

Worksite supervisors clearly stated the necessity of pre-training or life skill training designed to help participants prepare for the worksite. Reliability, attendance, personal presentation, and self-esteem training were listed as the most significant obstacles to performance on the job. Many supervisors found that the paycheck alone was not a sufficient work incentive. Worksites responded very differently to the perceived lack of pre-training. Some supervisors held workshops and developed mentoring programs, while others did not think they had time to deal with these issues.

Other supervisor suggestions for improvement, include: the need for clarification about the role of supervisors with CJ, the need for supervisor training to best fulfill their role, and the need for increased communication with CJ contractors, particularly about the support services available to participants while on the worksite.

DSHS case managers focused their suggestions around the referral process for CJ. As already discussed, they stated the need for clearer guidelines about who to refer to CJ and how to complete the process. Case managers also requested more communication with CJ contractors during this process so that they can provide support to participants if placement is not occurring quickly.

Case managers also described general suggestions related to the overall WorkFirst program. A main complaint was the size of caseloads, averaging over 100 cases per case manager. They related difficulties in coordinating with Employment Security Division (ES), and confusion

about roles. Case managers also stated that participants in general do not believe that the time limit will be mandatory, and therefore are difficult to engage. This is particularly true for long time recipients.[41]

Participants' main suggestions for improvement were very similar to those found through survey findings. As described in other sections, participants' focused on post-CJ issues, such as the need for more transition into unsubsidized employment and the need for a longer CJ program. Some participants also suggested that communication with CJ contractors could be improved.

Recommendations

The data collected for this report suggest that participants gain personal and long-term employment benefits from Community Jobs. The nine months of work and the mentoring received from case managers and worksite supervisors are key factors in these gains. Although these data show that people value work, they also clearly show the complications of resolving the employment issues that previously prevented these individuals from keeping a job. Reviewing the data in this evaluation, it is clear that this already valuable program can be significantly improved. Five main issues are at the heart of needed program improvement:

- The role/expectations of worksite supervisors
- Job readiness training and problem solving
- The transition from Community Jobs to unsubsidized work
- Job retention services
- Communication issues

After a discussion of these five issues, recommendations follow for improving the Community Jobs program.

First, no clear expectations exist for the worksite supervisor and participant when on the worksite. Questions arise such as: should the CJ experience be a job like any other job where the worksite supervisor is simply a supervisor and the participant is expected to be just like any other employee *or* is CJ work clearly a training experience where the worksite supervisor attends to mentoring and training participants about work ethic while at the worksite. Participants value and gain self-esteem from being workers like all others at their worksite but participants also need extra help learning to balance work and personal issues in order to be successful in their work. Participants could benefit from additional assistance from supervisors and co-workers on both technical skills and work place basics. Some supervisors routinely provide this type of assistance, while others feel that it is important for CJ participants to learn to manage these issues independently.

Next, participants' lack of work readiness, although not unexpected, interferes with other on-the-job learning opportunities. The goal of Community Jobs is to prepare "hard-to-employ" individuals for employment. Yet worksite supervisors are not well equipped to provide training for both workplace basics, such as knowing to call in when the employee will be sick or late, and the technical skills of the job such as computer skills or learning to drive a bus. In some cases work ethic problems are not simply a lack of knowledge but are also related to other personal barriers. For example, an individual may exhibit poor attendance based on a lack of transportation or show a lack of motivation because the job isn't a good match of interests and skills. Worksite supervisors are not responsible for resolving support services issues and it is not always clear when it is their responsibility to deal with these issues and when the CJ contractor should be involved. Clear expectations for the worksite supervisors may resolve some concerns

about job readiness while at the worksite but without attention to work readiness issues in general, participants will have trouble gaining both the work savvy and resume experience needed to move up a notch on a career ladder when they begin seeking unsubsidized employment.

Finding unsubsidized employment is another key area in which participants need additional guidance. A departure from Community Jobs without great attention and preparation for unsubsidized work leaves participants in a difficult position to once again find work on their own. Simply referring CJ participants to standard Employment Security job search processes abruptly disconnects the participants from CJ and disrupts the relationships established with CJ contractors and worksite supervisors during the Community Jobs experience. Leaving this environment without sufficient transitional support negatively impacts the transition to employment. Because participants have no work history or have had great difficulties ever sustaining employment they are at an added disadvantage. Knowing how to find and secure a permanent job requires focused assistance in the continued pattern of CJ. Learning new approaches to finding and sustaining work supports the momentum to work participants gained through CJ.

Currently, Community Jobs provides no support once participants leave the program. The need for continuing support is demonstrated by the data. Although a majority of the participants who could have worked for a year after CJ had a job during their first or second quarter post-CJ quarter, only 30% of this group kept their job for a full year. In addition, lower wages result from breaks in work. It is clear that personal situations and issues that took a lifetime to build cannot be fully resolved in 9 months, and therefore these participants have a particularly difficult time keeping their jobs and earning very substantial wages. Retention services were generally available, though difficult to access, during the period of this evaluation and therefore did not provide intensive support to these participants. However, WorkFirst policy makers are in the process of revising retention services for the entire WorkFirst program. The new "Job Success Coach" model looks promising but is projected to serve approximately only 5000 individuals in the first year. As the results show, retaining a job is a mechanism for substantially increasing wages and retention services are critically needed for moving individuals up an income ladder.

Finally, key stakeholders emphasized both the importance of communication and the need for improved communication among contractors, worksite supervisors, DSHS case managers, and participants. Communicating well about the referral process, the program components, and roles and expectations for everyone involved is critical to a quality process. If any one of these areas is unclear in the program design, confusion inevitably follows and well-intentioned program designs become muddled. Some specific communication issues include how much information the worksite supervisor should know about the participant, the role and responsibilities of the worksite supervisor, communication between DSHS and the CJ contractor about referral of the participant from DSHS to the CJ contractor and placement of the participant on a worksite, and the transition of the participant from CJ to post-CJ activities. Breakdowns in communication result in poor or no service delivery or a perception that stakeholders are not doing their job. While key stakeholders consistently noted communication as an issue, the favored approach to communication varied considerably. Some DSHS case managers requested frequent conversations while others want only a written monthly report. Certain worksite supervisors feel

they would benefit from frequent sites visits and conversations when issues arise, while others would like to handle situations on their own at the worksite and report to the CJ contractor monthly. Though standards for communication must remain flexible some attention must be paid to this issue to mitigate impacts on program process and program quality.

Recommendations to resolve issues and better achieve program goals:

1) **Clearly establish the role of worksite supervisors as mentors and provide supervisor training to fully prepare them for this role.** The worksite is a training situation. As workers, participants should not receive any kind of special or stigmatized status at that site, but supervisors should expect to spend additional time helping participants with work place basics, problem solving, *and* technical job skills. While supervisors are different it does seem that they could all benefit from hands-on interactive training about working with participants and the focus and goals of the program. Many contractors have prepared supervisor handbooks, but these are not sufficient to effectively train supervisors or support them in their role. Interactive training prepared and conducted either by OTED, local community colleges, or local CJ contractor staff is strongly encouraged and would serve as an effective resource when needed. The Trades Mentor Network, a project of the Seattle Workers Center, includes a supervisor training model that could be adapted to Community Jobs. Worksite supervisor development could also be continued and supported by ongoing supervisor meetings, brown bag lunches, and/or a supervisor's website discussion forum to discuss issues occurring with participants at the worksite and in the program. Worksite supervisors could also participate in regional CJ trainings to have discussions with and learn from supervisors in other areas of the state as well as different CJ contractors. Further development and strengthening of worksite supervisors' roles is critical to continued employer support of CJ and to improving the participants' experiences and facilitating their employment opportunities.

2) **Make available long-term, hands-on job readiness training and vocational skills training within the context of the work experience.** Learning basic work skills is not a two week process. Many participants have already participated in a one week Employment Security job readiness workshop which, according to supervisors and participants, did not have lasting effects. Other models suggest that longer-term, experiential training may be more effective either during the course of CJ or immediately following CJ. One way to allow for this type of training is to increase the CJ work week to 30 hours. The additional 10 hours could be team oriented and/or job specific to incorporate both soft skill and vocational skill learning in way that is relevant to participants and where peer consequences of certain actions (i.e. poor attendance, learning how others come to depend on you, decision making, etc.) become obvious. Private sector employers could be consulted in helping to develop training that meets workplace and industry specific skills standards.

   Alternatively, CJ could pursue and expand a pilot project already occurring. In Pierce County a small number of CJ placements are followed by placement into the Woodworkers 2000 job readiness program funded by OTED and operated by the Private

Industry Council. This 20 hour per week, 8-week training program emphasizes teamwork, problem solving, and other basic employability skills, as well as providing an introduction to the tools and processes used in secondary wood products manufacturing. The combination of vocational and soft skills training appeals to employers in this industry, who to date have made a job offer to every individual completing the training. A direct vocational skill and job readiness training placement immediately following CJ would help ease participants' transition to unsubsidized employment and help CJ break into private sector employment opportunities.

Where welfare-to-work or other suitable programs exist in CJ communities, every effort should be made to complement a CJ placement with enrollment in a program that directly prepares an individual for a specific career field. Links to the twelve to twenty-two weeks of pre-employment training designed specifically for individuals leaving welfare and offered by local community colleges should be strengthened and supported by OTED. Where programs with strong links to training, employers and employer-defined skill development do not exist, we recommend that OTED pursue creation of such programs and open opportunities to partner with local communities, colleges, and employers.

3) **Strengthen and refocus services at the end of CJ to more effectively support participant preparation and transition to unsubsidized employment.** Augmenting the role of the contractor in conjunction with Employment Security services and the participants' tools and new skills will ease the transition from CJ to unsubsidized employment. Contractors can use their own network of contacts to develop a larger variety of worksites as well as permanent job opportunities. Using these networks to help participants find a permanent job complements the development of additional worksites for future CJ participants so that a few worksites are not flooded with multiple participants and more permanent employment potential exists at each site. Because Community Jobs is focused in the public sector, contractors need to be able to break into the private sector where more jobs exist. As well as working more closely with ES, contractors can use existing contacts or develop relationships with private sector intermediaries such as the Seattle Jobs Initiative, the King County Jobs Initiative, PortJobs, each Workforce Development Council around the state, apprenticeship programs and other job ladder programs, such as the Shoreline Community College Job Ladders program. These organizations already have long term private employer connections and can enhance job search for Community Jobs participants. OTED can use its economic development expertise, business outreach staff, and other resources to train contractors on how to connect with private employers.

Participants can use new tools to enhance job search as well. The Individual Development Plan created for each individual as they enter the program can be used to develop a certificate of skills completed while in Community Jobs. Private sector employers can inform CJ contractors on the general skills and specific industry skills needed to obtain employment. A focus on providing appropriate skill learning opportunities and worksite supervisor sign-off on skills achieved lend credibility to CJ certificates. When CJ certificates become a systematic measure of quality, employers

will be able to count on them in order to hire qualified employees. In addition to certificates participants exiting the program should have step-by-step written plans for obtaining and keeping employment as well as contingency plans to quickly resolve situations such as lack of transportation and childcare. Both ES and the contractors can use this plan to work together in coordinating and supporting the participant's transition to unsubsidized work.

4) **Include retention services as a program component**. Retention services will help keep people continuously working and can keep them focused on a career ladder. Services could include transportation and child care assistance, choosing a wage goal and steps including training to achieve that goal, and troubleshooting when problems arise on the job and in the home. Retention services are not inexpensive, but they are worth the investment if individuals succeed in never returning to public assistance. OTED could pursue private funding sources to pilot various retention programs as part of Community Jobs as well as help contractors locally leverage resources within their community to provide these services. For example, working more collaboratively and closely with community colleges, industries, and business outreach staff, contractors could set up career ladder programs that include training, retention services and links to private employers. Employers have a stake in keeping qualified employees and could become a resource for insuring retention of these employees. Pooling public funding streams and private resources between stakeholders allows for the program and service development necessary to create sustained employment and wage progression opportunities for Community Jobs participants.

5) **Experiment in addressing certain communication issues and create uniformity in other areas**. Different approaches are needed to provide the level of customized contact that every separate DSHS case manager and worksite supervisor desires. Tools to enhance communication could include ongoing brown bag lunches or peer groups, websites such as the current Community Jobs Discussion forum, a variety of site visits and focus groups. DSHS in particular seemed to benefit from the focus group style of meeting with other offices. WorkFirst could support this type of opportunity for a learning exchange for both DSHS and Employment Security. Guaranteeing confidentiality of the focus group was important for an honest exchange of information and group facilitators external to these agencies are recommended. Worksite supervisors also indicated interest in some form of informal problem-solving and experience sharing opportunity, although many also indicated that they are very busy and don't need additional meeting requirements complicating their work life. Contractors should be encouraged to experiment with alternative mechanisms for helping their worksite supervisors learn from each other and should share these best practices with CJ contractors around the state. More opportunities for these types of contact may help to improve other CJ areas that also need to be strengthened.

   CJ benefited from innovations in localized program development. However, the lack of uniformity in some areas has contributed to communication problems. Now that the program is well into implementation quality could be improved by providing clear

guidance and timelines in certain areas of program process and service delivery. These areas include:

- referral processes and forms
- the maximum time allowed before enrollment into CJ
- components that must be included in an Individual Development Plan
- worksite development, worksite supervisor agreements, expectations and orientation
- job readiness training and,
- the process for transitioning from CJ to unsubsidized employment.

6) **Create a permanent evaluation system to support continuous improvement**. We strongly recommend that the CJ program create a permanent evaluation mechanism to determine outcomes and support continuous improvement of the program. The process that resulted in this report has several key characteristics:
   - An evaluation team that is independent of the state agency staff group which administers Community Jobs;
   - Use of multiple evaluation methodologies including analysis of administrative data from both OTED and ES, surveys, site visits, and focus groups with contractors, agency staff, worksite supervisors, and participants;
   - Informal feedback to stakeholders as well as a formal report; and
   - Periodic contact with all stakeholders rather than a single, end of funding cycle evaluation.

   Each of these characteristics adds value to the evaluation process. The picture gained by surveys is very different from the view obtained through focus groups. Each data source provides unique insights into program strengths and weaknesses and tells a more complete story than the UI wage data alone.

   The evaluation model used to produce this report can be improved in several ways. Interns or student research assistants operating under the guidance of experienced program evaluators could periodically conduct focus groups. This would reduce costs compared to the use of more senior staff. A round of site visits and focus groups should be conducted at least annually, if not every six months. With 17 host communities, this is not a trivial undertaking, but the richness and variety of insights gained from the pilot site focus groups suggests that this is a very valuable component of the evaluation process. The best way to do this may be to schedule one or two site visits each month, working through all of the CJ communities over the course of a year. Each site visit would be a 1-2 day visit by the evaluation team.

   Surveys of worksite supervisors and participants should be done on a sampling basis to reduce costs, simplify the evaluation process, and ensure a representative distribution of stakeholders. Perhaps a quarter of all supervisors and participants could be sampled and CJ contractors should be held responsible for insuring their survey response quota. If the survey forms were put on a website they could be filled in on-line, the time delays and costs associated with getting the surveys to the researchers could be reduced, and sensitive information could be protected more readily. In particular, the awkwardness

inherent in asking contractors to get each participant to fill out a survey commenting on contractor performance would be reduced if the participant could work at a computer station alone and fill out the survey. Contractors or other non-CJ agency staff could assist participants in interacting with the website without seeing the participant's responses. The evaluation team for this report would work with OTED to revise the survey questions and the system for collecting survey data.

Either a data sharing agreement with Employment Security or an agreement with the Workforce Development Board should be established to obtain wage data on a regular basis. Using the UI database a control group could be developed to offer different comparisons with Community Jobs. In addition employer information, reasons for exiting CJ, and links between participant wages, administrative data, and survey data should be included for a more complete analysis of the data.

The evaluation team would stay in contact with the program and its stakeholders as the evaluation process continues to evolve to immediately identify and work on resolving issues. The full outcomes assessment and evaluation report should be updated annually. Finally, the evaluation team for this report will assist OTED in fully developing the continuous improvement system for Community Jobs.

Endnotes

[1] TANF replaced Aid to Dependent Families (AFDC) as the means of federal public assistance.

[2] Weeks, Greg. 2000. "Education and Training". *WorkFirst Study: 3000 Washington Families.* Washington Employment Security Department 1 (3).

[3] TANF replaced Aid to Dependent Families (AFDC) as the means of federal public assistance

4 In Washington State, WorkFirst is the state welfare reform program. Four agencies are equally responsible for implementing WorkFirst: Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Employment Security (ES), Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED), and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. Community Jobs is a WorkFirst program.

5 See the participant demographic section of the CJ Program Overview for a discussion of multiple barriers to employment.

[6] OTED estimates that a typical TANF grant for a family of three is $546 per month.

7 50% earnings disregard means that only half of a program participant's paycheck is counted in calculating their income eligibility to receive their TANF grant. Community Jobs participants receive a residual TANF check in addition to CJ income and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

[8] Please see Appendix F for the CJ program scope of work.

[9] TANF reinvestment funds are generated by the savings from Washington's reduced welfare caseload.

[10] OTED reports that 93% of CJ participants are co-enrolled in additional training and advancement activities.

[11] Information is entered into MIS by the contractors and maintained by OTED staff. MIS maintains a record of every participant enrolled into CJ. The demographics in this section are based on information available in MIS through July, 2000.

[12] Data on participant ages is entered into the database by contractors. For participant ages: N=2353 which is 38% of all those entered into MIS.

[13] Klawitter, Marieka M. 2000. "Welfare Impressions". *WorkFirst Study: 3000 Washington Families.* Washington Employment Security Department 1 (1).

[14] Data on participant educational levels is entered into the database by contractors. For participant education level: N=2512 which is 41% of all those entered into MIS.

[15] Survey results on education and training were included in the preliminary results series of the WorkFirst Study of 3000 Washington Families. Klawitter, Marieka M. 2000. "Education and Training". *WorkFirst Study: 3000 Washington Families.* Washington Employment Security Department 1 (2).

[16] The Job Gap Study defines a family wage (1999 dollars) as $28,975 for a single adult and one child needing full-time child care and $37,248 for a single adult with two children one pre-school age needing full-time child care and one of school age needing only pre or after school care. *Northwest Job Gap Study, Searching for Work that Pays,* Northwest Policy Center and Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, 1999

[17] Employment Security administers the Unemployment Insurance system. Please see Appendix A for a full discussion of methodology.

[18] Because employer information was not included with the data two different wages in one quarter typically but may not necessarily mean an individual worked two different jobs.

[19] Participants can exit CJ and begin work in the same quarter therefore the quarter that a participant exited CJ is considered their first post-CJ quarter in which they could work.

[20] Areas are 1) King County, 2) Pierce County, 3) Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties, 4) Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Orielle, and Okanagon Counties, and 5) Thurston, Lewis and Mason counties.

[21] Approximately 85% of all employees are covered under unemployment insurance. Therefore, this discrepancy may be because individuals are employed but not covered by UI, unemployed, employed in the underground economy, or error in reporting social security numbers. Please see Appendix B for complete UI wage data tables.

[22] 728 people had wage data available through the 1st quarter of 2000

[23] Weeks, Greg. 2000. "Education and Training". *WorkFirst Study: 3000 Washington Families.* Washington Employment Security Department 1 (3).

[24] While the quarter a participant exits CJ is considered their first possible quarter of work, participants may leave CJ at the end of a quarter and only be able to report wages in the 2nd quarter after leaving CJ. Aggregating the first and 2nd quarter of wages captures those individuals.

[25] First quarter wages are often significantly lower than 2nd quarter wages which may reflect the shorter period of time participants could have earned wages in the same quarter of exit from CJ compared with the 2nd full quarter after leaving CJ.

[26] Weeks, Greg. 2000. "Education and Training". *WorkFirst Study: 3000 Washington Families.* Washington Employment Security Department 1 (3).

[27] Of those with a match in the system only 216 individuals could have worked 4 quarters or more.

[28] Participants who could have worked four or more quarters left the program anytime from July 1998 to June 1999 and the percent of total time worked is based on the quarter in which participants left and the number of quarters they could have worked ranging from one to seven quarters.

[29] Worksite supervisors, participants, and DSHS case managers are considered key stakeholders in the program due to their direct level of involvement and role in implementations. The evaluation did not collect data from CJ contractors because it is both their role and OTED's role in implementation that was evaluated along with program design.

[30] Please see Appendix A for a full discussion of methodology.

[31] Closed-ended survey questions from the worksite supervisor surveys were designed using a five point Likert Scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree. When presenting findings, agree and strongly agree are considered positive responses, neutral is considered a neutral response, and disagree and strongly disagree are considered negative responses. Many closed ended questions in the participant surveys were asked using a five point Likert Scale for answers. For these questions, responses were categorized into positive, neutral, and negative responses. Full text of surveys is available in Appendix B.

[32] More information is also provided in Appendix A: Methodology.

[33] Please see Appendix D for focus group protocols and Appendix E for focus group attendance information.

[34] Please see Appendix C for a table of cross-tabulation results.

[35] Although this question was stated in terms of "most valuable", 54% of respondents choose multiple program aspects. Percentages, therefore, will not equal 100 %.

[36] Please see the graph in the Suggestions for Improvement section for the full list of supervisor suggestions for improvement.

[37] This average was calculated by OTED.

[38] Answers to open-ended questions can contain more than one theme – frequency percentages, therefore, will not equal 100%.

[39] Although this question was also written using a Likert Scale for responses, it did not contain a sufficiently neutral term. The presumed neutral term, understands, was therefore interpreted as a positive response and for interpretive purposes was grouped with the two positive responses, understands well and understands completely.

[40] Although this question was stated in terms of "most valuable", 54% of respondents choose multiple program aspects. Percentages, therefore, will not equal 100 %.

[41] These comments stemmed from conversations around hard-to-employ participants and the lack of time to help them. DSHS case managers expressed specific concern about individuals who have received public assistance for many years and what will happen when they reach the federally mandated lifetime limit of 60 months to receive TANF.

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Appendix A: Methodology

The data for this analysis was generated from multiple sources, including unemployment insurance wage data, surveys, focus groups, and the CJ Management Information System (MIS). These multiple sources and types of data were selected to produce the diverse qualitative and quantitative data necessary to evaluate the Community Jobs Program.[1] The quantitative information is intended to clearly evaluate the employment and wage outcomes of the program. The qualitative data is intended to evaluate the program by telling the contextual story behind the quantitative data. Both types of data are useful in a continuous improvement process designed to improve outcomes for future CJ participants.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Data

The UI data system provides payroll information that all employers covered by unemployment insurance must report on a quarterly basis. Information for this assessment was collected on the employment pattern and wages reported for the quarter that an individual left Community Jobs and the quarters thereafter. The information was compiled in a database and analyzed (see the Outcomes section of this report). The researchers received all data with no identifying information.

The UI system incorporates a two-quarter lag in reporting. Because Community Jobs has only been in operation for two years and because of the nine months of program duration, wage data could only be reported for participants who left or completed CJ and began employment during the third quarter of 1998 through the first quarter of 2000.

UI wage data was analyzed for the participants served by the five Phase I contractors who offer CJ in the following areas: 1) King County, 2) Pierce County, 3) Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties, 4) Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Orielle, and Okanagon Counties, and 5) Thurston, Lewis and Mason counties. Only these five contractors had been in operation long enough to graduate participants who could have worked for a full year after leaving the program. Data from these early graduates allow analysis of wage progression and employment patterns over time. In addition, these five contractors represent both rural and urban areas with varied regional economic trends and employment opportunities.

These five Phase I Community Jobs contractors submitted the names, social security numbers, and the date of program exit for all participants that exited Community Jobs from the start of the program in July 1998 through August 2000. A total of 1406 names were submitted and of these 922 were matched in the UI system.[2] The two-quarter lag in UI reporting resulted in wage data being available for only the individuals who exited CJ through the first quarter of 2000 - 728 of the 922 individuals originally matched in the UI system. UI wage data then enabled analysis of the post-CJ employment status, number of jobs, and wages for these participants on a quarterly basis.

There were several limitations to how the data was reported that resulted in the exclusion of important outcome measures. A reason for leaving Community Jobs was not provided by all the contractors[3]; therefore no analysis could be conducted on the wages of those completing the CJ experience compared with those who left the program for any reason. This analysis should be conducted in the future. The data also did not include the type of employer providing the wages, therefore no conclusions could be drawn about the type of industries CJ graduates are entering. Employers are classified by industry group at Employment Security, and this information should be incorporated in future outcome evaluations. Inherent difficulties exist in the UI system for reporting hours worked for each quarter of wages reported. To the extent that this problem can be mitigated a future evaluation should also attempt to determine the full-time/part-time nature of work for participants after exiting CJ as well as hourly wages.

Surveys

Surveys were designed to gather important qualitative data from participants and worksites. Survey questions were generally designed to assess the perception of program quality and job readiness of participants.

Three types of surveys were developed to achieve this goal: worksite supervisor surveys, participant six-month surveys, and participant exit surveys.[4] These survey types were designed to coordinate with the contractor payment points already in place for the CJ program. By coordinating survey distribution with receipt of payment points, this strategy attempted to survey as large a participant and worksite group as possible.[5]

These three types of surveys were distributed to all 17 Community Jobs contractors beginning in February 2000. At the outset of the assessment process contractors were provided a packet that included:

- A memo explaining the purpose and nature of the assessment
- A set of instructions for appropriately distributing surveys
- Verification forms to document completion of the surveys while insuring confidentiality for respondents
- OTED self-addressed envelopes so survey respondents could mail surveys or return them to the contractor in a sealed envelope
- Hard-copy and disk survey forms

Due to contractor, worksite, and administrator concerns that the reading level of surveys was too complex, a decision was made to redesign the participant surveys. The revised six month and exit participant surveys were introduced to contractors in March and April 2000 during five regional CJ trainings.[6] Only the results from the revised survey are presented and analyzed in this evaluation.[7]

The surveys included two types of questions designed to gather qualitative information about worksite supervisor and participant experiences with CJ:

1. Specific, closed ended questions with a defined list of four or five answers from which to choose. This question type focuses the respondent on answering questions about a particular aspect of a CJ component.[8]

2. Open-ended questions with blank spaces for comments. This type allows the respondent to answer broader questions about CJ components in whatever way they choose.

Confidentiality: The assessment process attempted to prevent contractors from seeing any surveys directly to avoid influencing respondent answers. Contractors were provided the materials and instructed to ensure confidentiality to the participant and worksite supervisor during the administration of the surveys. Both participants and administrators were asked to seal their completed surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelopes provided that were sent directly to the OTED Community Jobs administrators. In addition, both groups were asked to sign verification forms to be submitted to their contractor to record the completion of the assessment.

Survey Totals There were 57 six-month surveys and 68 exit surveys submitted by contractors. Participants may have completed both six month and participant surveys. As identifying number or names were not included, it is impossible to determine if there was overlap in the responses. There were 136 worksite supervisor surveys submitted by contractors.

Surveys were received from 13 of the 17 contractors (77%). Because of the survey participation rate and the incomplete contractor representation, these findings may not be representative of all of the CJ participants and supervisors.[9] They do, however, provide an important look at how these supervisors and participants view key CJ components.

Worksite Surveys

Contractors distributed worksite surveys to worksite supervisors at the time their CJ participant reached six months or exited CJ. The survey included two major sections 1) working with Community Jobs contractor and 2) working with the Community Jobs participant. Questions about the CJ contractor were designed to address the quality of the relationship and communication between the worksite supervisor and the CJ contractor.

Participant Six-Month and Exit Surveys

The participant six-month survey was to be administered to every participant after they had been working six months in the CJ program. This point in time was chosen because six months of participation marked a substantial enough length of time in the program to answer questions about the experience but allowed sufficient time for a changed perspective at the time of exit. Contractors were authorized to utilize support services funding to aid participants with low literacy levels, low English proficiency, or other needed accommodations in completing the written survey format.

Questions in the six-month survey were divided into five main sections:
1) working with the CJ practitioner;
2) questions about the worksite;
3) questions about participant's Individual Development Plan;

4) readiness for employment; and
5) overall program ratings and comments.

The exit survey was administered to CJ participants at any point they left the program. In order to be able to compare findings at the six month and exit points, the exit survey included all of the questions found in the six-month survey. In addition, it also included a short set of questions designed to address future employment and plans for self-support.

Focus Groups

A total of 13 focus groups were conducted over the course of 5 months beginning January 2000 and ending in May 2000. The focus group strategy was designed to gather qualitative data from key CJ stakeholders in the field that operate in diverse areas throughout the State.[10]

Six focus group sites were selected as a representative mix of Phase I and Phase II[11] CJ contractors, smaller and larger sites as well as rural and urban: Bellingham (Northwest Development Council), Spokane (Career Path Services), Tacoma (Tacoma Pierce County Employment and Training Consortium), Walla Walla (Blue Mountain Action Council), Wenatchee (Chelan Douglas Community Action Center), Everett (Service Alternatives for Washington). At each of these locations, with the exception of Wenatchee[12], one focus group was held with DSHS case managers and one with CJ worksite supervisors. Participant focus groups were also conducted at two locations: Bellingham and Everett.

Protocols for the focus group discussions are provided in Appendix D. Questions were designed to both ascertain program quality and focus on previously identified concerns for CJ in the following areas:

- Overall experience and reaction to Community Jobs
- Perception of the quality of service received from CJ contractors
- Quality of work experience
- Ability of CJ to prepare individuals for work

Within the focus groups, participants, supervisors and DSHS case managers were able to have a conversation about their experiences with CJ. Although there were specific questions asked within each group, this more flexible and interactive dynamic elicited a different type of qualitative information than what is gathered through surveys.

CJ Management Information System (MIS) Data

The CJ Management Information System (MIS) serves as the primary database for the Community Jobs program and is operated by the OTED Community Jobs staff. This database includes information on all participants who have entered the Community Jobs program and provided the overall demographic information to describe the population. MIS also supplied the identifying numbers and dates of participation in the program for all participants to determine participation rates for the survey and the information needed to request Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Data.[13]

Endnotes

[1] In addition to the concerns presented in this text, please contact the Economic Opportunity Institute for an exhaustive discussion of possible limitations of the data.

[2] Approximately 85% of all employees are covered under unemployment insurance. Therefore, this discrepancy may be because individuals are employed but not covered by UI, unemployed, employed in the underground economy, or error in reporting social security numbers. Please see Appendix B for complete UI wage data tables.

[3] Pierce County did not include codes indicating the reason participants left CJ.

4 Please see Appendix B for survey questionnaires.

5 Random selection strategy for respondents was not possible at this time. There also was not an appropriate control group available for comparison.

[6] At this time, EOI staff provided training for how to implement all three types of surveys, clarified the reasons for revision, and answered questions. In addition, new hard copy and disk forms of the survey were sent to all of the contractors. The instructions for implementing the survey remained the same.

7 For the purposes of this assessment, results from the first version of the participant six-month survey have been discarded and will not be discussed. For copies of the original survey forms, please contact the Economic Opportunity Institute.

[8] Closed-ended survey questions from the worksite supervisor surveys were designed using a five point Likert Scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree. When presenting findings, agree and strongly agree are considered positive responses, neutral is considered a neutral response, and disagree and strongly disagree are considered negative responses. Many closed ended questions in the participant surveys were asked using a five point Likert Scale for answers. For these questions, responses were categorized into positive, neutral, and negative responses. Full text of surveys are available in Appendix B.

[9] As many as 1297 people could have completed a six month or exit survey during the implementation period, this total represents a 10% participation rate for participants.

[10] Please see Appendix D for focus group protocols and Appendix E for focus group attendance information.

11 Please see the Community Jobs Program Overview section for an explanation of the development of the CJ program.

12 The Wenatchee DSHS office declined to be included in the focus group strategy.

[13] EOI and Northwest Policy Center staff maintain strict confidentiality with the data provided through the MIS system.

Appendix B: Wage Data Tables

Contractor 1: King County

Contractor 2: Pierce County

Contractor 3: Grays Harbor and Pacific County

Contractor 4: Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Orielle, and Okanogan Counties

Contractor 5: Thurston, Lewis, and Mason Counties

Table 1: Participants submitted, matched, and wage data collected by contractor

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Participants submitted						
	174	**300**	**352**	**304**	**276**	**1406**
Participants matched in UI System						
Count	158	232	219	213	100	**922**
Percent of those submitted	91%	77%	62%	70%	36%	**66%**
Participants with wage data available through 1st quarter of 2000[1]						
Count	123	227	155	151	72	**728**
Percent of those submitted	71%	76%	44%	50%	26%	**52%**

[1] Wage data was only available for participants that completed CJ before April 2000. Second and third quarters of 2000 completions were too recent for wage data to be submitted.

Table 2: Employment and number of jobs for participants with wage data available

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Participants with wage data available						
	123	**227**	**155**	**151**	**72**	**728**
Participants employed [2]						
Count	112	136	98	90	43	**479**
Percent of those with wage data	91%	60%	63%	60%	60%	**66%**
One job[3]						
Count	70	100	76	63	38	**347**
Percent of those employed	63%	74%	78%	70%	88%	**72%**
More than one job[4]						
Count	42	36	22	27	5	**132**
Percent of those employed	38%	26%	22%	30%	12%	**28%**

Table 3: Fourth qtr. and continuous employment for participants who could have worked for at least 1 year

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Participants that could have worked for one year[5]						
	59	**45**	**53**	**48**	**11**	**216**
Worked in the fourth quarter						
Count	31	28	27	24	5	115
Percent of those who could work one year	53%	62%	51%	50%	45%	53%
Worked four quarters continuously						
Count	19	16	15	12	2	64
Percent of those who could work one year	32%	36%	28%	25%	18%	30%

[2] Participants were employed during at least one quarter.
[3] According to the UI wage data, these participants held only one job during any quarter they worked.
[4] According to the UI wage data, these participants held more than one job during at least one of the quarters they worked.
[5] Only participants that left CJ in the second quarter of 1999 and before could have four quarters of wages reported.

Table 4: First quarter of post-CJ employment for participants who could have worked for at least one year

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Participants who could have worked for one year[6]						
	59	**45**	**53**	**48**	**11**	**216**
Did not work						
Count	7	3	7	4	2	**23**
Percent of those who could work one year	12%	7%	13%	8%	18%	**11%**
Began working in the 1st quarter						
Count	46	22	25	21	5	**119**
Percent of those who could work one year	78%	49%	47%	44%	45%	**55%**
Began working in the 2nd quarter						
Count	3	11	12	17	3	**46**
Percent of those who could work one year	5%	24%	23%	35%	27%	**21%**
Began working in the 3rd quarter						
Count	2	4	5	4	1	**16**
Percent of those who could work one year	3%	9%	9%	8%	9%	**7%**
Began working in the 4th quarter or after						
Count	1	5	4	2	0	**12**
Percent of those who could work one year	2%	11%	8%	4%	0%	**6%**

[6] Only participants that left CJ in the second quarter of 1999 and before could have four quarters of wages reported.

Table 5: Percent of post-CJ time worked for participants who could have worked for at least one year[7]

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Participants who could have worked for one year[8]						
	59	**45**	**53**	**48**	**11**	**216**
Did not work						
Count	7	3	7	4	2	**23**
Percent of those who could work one year	12%	7%	13%	8%	18%	**11%**
Worked up to one-third (33%) of the time after CJ						
Count	10	10	13	8	1	**42**
Percent of those who could work one year	17%	22%	25%	17%	9%	**19%**
Worked between one and two-thirds (34 - 67%) of the time after CJ						
Count	12	7	16	14	4	**53**
Percent of those who could work one year	20%	16%	30%	29%	36%	**25%**
Worked more than two-thirds (67 - 100%) of the time after CJ						
Count	30	25	17	22	4	**98**
Percent of those who could work one year	51%	56%	32%	46%	36%	**45%**

[7] Percent of time worked after CJ is computed relative to the participants' exit dates from the program. This figure is a proportion based on the number of quarters with wages out of the number of quarters they could have worked from their program exit dates through the first quarter of 2000 (the last quarter for which UI data was available.)
[8] Only participants that left CJ in the second quarter of 1999 and before could have four quarters of wages reported.

Table 6: Participants earning over $2500 for the first four quarters

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
Worked in the first quarter[9]						
	103	**96**	**70**	**52**	**31**	**352**
Earning more than $2500 in first quarter						
Count	10	16	5	7	5	**43**
Percent of those working in 1st qtr	10%	17%	7%	13%	16%	**12%**
Worked in the second quarter[10]						
	59	**75**	**59**	**61**	**27**	**281**
Earning more than $2500 in second quarter						
Count	17	30	14	19	10	**90**
Percent of those working 2nd qtr	29%	40%	24%	31%	37%	**32%**
Worked in the third quarter[11]						
	43	**45**	**43**	**44**	**13**	**188**
Earning more than $2500 in third quarter						
Count	15	24	10	15	8	**72**
Percent of those working in 3rd qtr	35%	53%	23%	34%	62%	**38%**
Worked in the fourth quarter[12]						
	31	**28**	**27**	**24**	**5**	**115**
Earning more than $2500 in fourth quarter						
Count	10	17	6	11	3	**47**
Percent of those working 4th qtr	32%	61%	22%	46%	60%	**41%**

[9] In order to have wage data reported, participants must have worked in their first quarter and left CJ during the first quarter of 2000 or before.

[10] In order to have wage data reported, participants must have worked in their second quarter and left CJ during the fourth quarter of 1999 or before.

[11] In order to have wage data reported, participants must have worked in their third quarter and left CJ during the third quarter of 1999 or before.

[12] In order to have wage data reported, participants must have worked in their fourth quarter and left CJ during the second quarter of 1999 or before.

Table 7: Mean wages for the first four quarters by contractor

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
1st qtr.	$1,310	$1,402	$1,220	$1,007	$1,450	$1,285
2nd qtr.	$1,786	$2,157	$1,758	$1,766	$3,382	$2,028
3rd qtr.	$1,788	$2,519	$1,754	$2,125	$2,825	$2,106
4th qtr.	$2,141	$2,936	$1,709	$2,353	$3,081	$2,318

Table 8: Median Wages for first four quarters by contractor

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
1st qtr.	$1,140	$958	$796	$516	$956	$914
2nd qtr.	$1,160	$2,078	$ 1,597	$ 1,430	$ 1,317	$1,571
3rd qtr.	$1,359	$2,854	$ 1,473	$ 1,613	$ 3,300	$1,724
4th qtr.	$1,916	$3,163	$ 1,142	$ 2,153	$ 2,909	$2,172

Table 9: Mean wages for participants who worked at least four consecutive quarters

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
1st qtr.	$1,405	$1,125	$1,226	$1,163	$1,756	$1,271
2nd qtr.	$1,533	$2,670	$2,188	$2,865	$4,063	$2,295
3rd qtr.	$2,047	$2,935	$2,197	$3,440	$4,622	$2,653
4th qtr.	$2,762	$3,487	$2,261	$2,118	$4,979	$2,774

Table 10: Median wages for participants who worked at least four consecutive quarters

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2	Contractor 3	Contractor 4	Contractor 5	TOTAL
1st quarter	$1,470	$962	$976	$929	$1,756	$1,179
2nd quarter	$1,160	$3,069	$1,792	$2,853	$4,063	$1,872
3rd quarter	$2,012	$3,101	$1,659	$2,785	$4,622	$2,448
4th quarter	$2,256	$3,633	$1,990	$1,739	$4,979	$2,413

Appendix C: Survey Forms

Worksite Supervisor Survey[1]

Work with Community Jobs Contractor
Do you agree or disagree that you received adequate orientation and information at the start of your participation as a Community Jobs Host Worksite

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that you receive adequate support from the Community Jobs Contractor

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that you are in frequent contact with the Community Jobs Contractor?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that the Community Jobs Contractor is quickly responsive to your concerns

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

What have your concerns been regarding the Community Jobs Contractor?

Other Comments?

Working with the Community Jobs Participant
Do you agree or disagree that the CJ participant is well matched with your organization?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that participant difficulties at the worksite or in their personal lives are quickly addressed to facilitate learning in the workplace

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that you are able to adequately resolve issues with the CJ participant

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that you communicate frequently with the CJ participant

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that participants are well prepared and receive continuous support for adding value to your workplace.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that the combination of work skills learned at your site and additional training is preparing participants well for unsubsidized work

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that CJ participants add value to your organization

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Do you agree or disagree that concerns regarding CJ participants are responded to quickly

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

What have been your concerns regarding CJ participants

What are your overall comments about the Community Jobs program?

How would you improve the program?

Participant Survey Forms[2]

Six Month Survey

Please fill out the survey below. The goal of this survey is to learn about the quality of your experience in Community Jobs. Information from this survey will be used to improve the program experience for you and for other Community Jobs participants. Thank you!

Working with your Employment Specialist

Please think about your first meeting with your employment specialist (the person who worked with you at (name of CBO).

1. How long did your first meeting last?

☐ Less than an hour ☐ 1 hour ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ Half a day ☐ All day

2. After you first met with your Community Jobs employment specialist, how long was it before you started your first day of work on a job site?

☐ During the first meeting ☐ During the first week
☐ During the second week ☐ After the second week

3. Did you feel you were a partner in choosing your career interests and worksite?

☐ Not at all ☐ Somewhat
☐ Very slightly a partner ☐ Quite a bit ☐ Definitely a partner

4. Do you feel that your employment specialist understands your needs and interests both for your employment and in other areas of your life?

☐ Not at all ☐ Understands a little ☐ Understands
☐ Understands well ☐ Understands completely

5. Do you feel you were a partner in choosing other services to be provided for you and for creating a plan to achieve career goals?

☐ Not at all ☐ Somewhat a partner
☐ Very slightly ☐ Quite a bit ☐ Definitely a partner

6. How often do you meet and/or talk to your employment specialist now?

☐ Every month ☐ Every week
☐ Every other week ☐ 2-3 times a week ☐ Daily

7. Do you feel that your employment specialist is working with you to provide a quality employment experience?

☐ Not at all ☐ Very slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Quite a bit ☐ Definitely

8. How do you feel about talking with your employment specialist

☐ Very difficult to talk to
☐ Sometimes difficult to talk to
☐ Very easy to talk to
☐ No opinion
☐ Easy to talk to

9. Do you feel your employment specialist is easy to contact and responds quickly to your needs?

☐ Not at all easy to contact/ doesn't respond quickly
☐ Sometimes easy to contact/ sometimes doesn't respond quickly
☐ No opinion
☐ Usually easy to contact/usually responds quickly
☐ Always easy to contact/ always responds quickly

10. Comments about your employment specialist:

Worksite

11. Were you referred to any other Community Jobs worksites before you came to your current worksite?

☐ No ☐ Yes

12. If you were sent to other sites that did not work out, please describe in the box below what happened and why you needed to leave that site:

13. Overall how satisfied are you with your current job

☐ Very unhappy
☐ Somewhat unhappy
☐ No opinion
☐ Satisfied
☐ Very satisfied

14. How satisfied are you with your job duties

☐ Very unhappy
☐ Somewhat unhappy
☐ No opinion
☐ Satisfied
☐ Very satisfied

15. Do you feel your supervisor is providing opportunities to learn skills

☐ Not at all
☐ Some opportunities
☐ No opinion
☐ Often
☐ Very frequently

16. How do you feel about talking with your supervisor

☐ Very difficult to talk to
☐ Sometimes difficult to talk to
☐ Very easy to talk to
☐ No opinion
☐ Easy to talk to

17. Would you like to continue in this type of work

☐ YES ☐ NO

18. Comments about your worksite and job:

Individual Development Plan

19. Do you agree with the plan you signed to achieve your career goals?

☐ Completely disagree
☐ Disagree with parts of it
☐ Agree with all of it
☐ No opinion
☐ Agree with most of it

20. In this first six months of the program have you been actively working toward achieving the goals set in your plan both for employment and other life issues

☐ Not at all
☐ Working on a few of the goals
☐ Working on all of the goals
☐ Working on at least half of the goals
☐ Working on two thirds of the goals

Readiness for Employment

21. Have you held a job in the past?

☐ Never had a job
☐ Not for many years
☐ A few different jobs for shorter lengths of time
☐ I have worked continuously in the past

22. Has your Community Jobs experience helped you to get ready for employment?

☐ No, not at all
☐ Not very much
☐ No opinion
☐ Yes, somewhat
☐ Yes, definitely

23. Which aspects of the Community Jobs program have been the most helpful?

☐ Help and counsel provided by you employment specialist
☐ Job experience
☐ Help and advice provided by your worksite supervisor or co-workers
☐ Training or education programs you participated in at the same time as your community job
☐ Other (please describe in the box below)

Overall

24. Please rate your overall Community Jobs experience

☐poor ☐fair ☐good ☐very good ☐excellent

25. What did you like about this experience?

26. How do you feel your experience could be improved?

Exit Survey

The Exit Survey contained all of the questions included in the Six Month Survey with the addition of the following four questions. These questions were inserted after question number 23, and became questions 24 – 27. The Overall section of the Six Month Survey (formerly questions 24 – 26) followed these questions in the survey format and were renumbered questions 28 – 30 for the Exit Survey.

24. Has your Community Jobs caseworker or your worksite supervisor helped you in searching for a permanent job?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ In several ways
- ☐ In quite a few ways
- ☐ Very often and thoroughly

25. Do you have a job lined up right now?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. Do you have a plan and any necessary help with things like childcare or transportation that might make it difficult for you to get to a job regularly and on time?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. What do you feel you need right now to be successful in finding and keeping a job that Community Jobs has not helped you with? (Please describe what you need in the box below)

[1] Only one version of this survey was implemented during the evaluation. All worksite supervisor survey results presented within the report were gathered using this instrument.

[2] This is the revised version of the six month survey used in the evaluation. Participant results presented within the report were gathered using these revised six month and exit participant survey instruments.

Appendix D: Cross-tabulation Table

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of Participant Overall CJ Experience and Post-CJ Job

		Overall CJ experience					
		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Total
Have job lined up now?	No	1	3	2	13	11	30
	Yes	2		3	9	8	22
	Total	3	3	5	22	19	52

Appendix E: Focus Group Protocols

DSHS Focus Group Protocol

Goals: To obtain information on both the DSHS process for implementing the Community Jobs program and the perceived effectiveness of the program in meeting DSHS goals for Community Jobs participants.

Timeline and Process: The evaluation process will involve meetings with small groups of case managers at 6 DSHS Community Service Offices who are placing TANF clients in the Community Jobs programs. These meetings will be scheduled approximately one per month beginning in January 2000. If possible, the timing of the meetings will be coordinated with worksite supervisor and Community Jobs participant focus groups.

At each meeting, case managers who regularly refer clients to Community Jobs should be convened for a 2 hour discussion. This session should be held at the CSO if possible to minimize the time required of case managers. It can be scheduled at a time in the day most convenient for the CSO. The evaluation team of Paul Sommers of the University of Washington and Annette Case of the Economic Opportunity Institute would ideally meet with case managers only. All discussions would be kept confidential; that is no individual case managers of Community Jobs clients would be identified in the summary of the discussions drafted by Sommers and Case and sent back to the Community Jobs office. Unless very unusual and significant issues are raised at particular CSOs, the report will reflect discussions held at all five CSOs rather than each office individually.

Questions:

General

Please tell me what you know about Community Jobs and how it operates?

What has your involvement been with the program?

Please tell us how you feel about the process of working on CJ with issues such as prospective budgeting, referral, completion, etc.

Client Related Questions

How do you select TANF clients for referral to Community Jobs?

How do you talk with participants about Community Jobs?

Please tell us about your relationship with your Community Jobs participants?

How do you feel participants fare during their experience in Community Jobs?

How well do you feel the program prepares individuals for unsubsidized employment?

Contractor Questions

Please tell us about your relationship with the Community Jobs contractor?

Have you had clients referred back by the contractor, and if so, is it clear why?

Is there anything you or the contractor could do to minimize refer-backs?

Does the contractor make timely decisions about clients you have referred?

Are you pleased with the types of job placements contractors are arranging for your clients?

Does the contractor keep you adequately informed about what is going on with your clients while they are in Community Jobs?

Are there any problems in your working relationship with the contractor?

Please tell us your general experience about what happens with participants at the end of their Community Jobs experience?

Are your clients succeeding in getting unsubsidized employment?

Do your clients require continuing services from DSHS after they get an unsubsidized job?

Is ESD providing appropriate assistance to your clients as they re-enter the job market?

Summary

Overall please tell us your impressions of the program – What is positive and what is not?

What do you think would improve the program?

Community Jobs Worksites

Goals: To evaluate worksite quality as well as perceived effectiveness of the Community Jobs program.

Timeline and Process : Worksites in five of the local communities hosting Community Jobs participants will participate. One site visit will be conducted each month beginning January 2000. At each of these sites, the local Community Jobs contractor will be asked to convene a group of 5-10 worksite supervisors who have supervised one or more Community Jobs participant. A 2-3 hour focus group will be convened, in the contractor's offices if possible, or in other space arranged by the contractor or the evaluation team.

Contractor staff and Community Jobs staff will not participate in these sessions. The participants in the meeting will be the evaluation team, consisting of Paul Sommers of the University of Washington and Annette Case of the Economic Opportunity Institute, plus the worksite supervisors. All of the discussions at these meetings will be kept confidential; that is no specific names of organizations or individuals will be communicated back to the local contractor or the CJ program in Olympia. A summary report reflection the evaluation team's summary of the major issues raised in the discussions will be drafted and sent to both the local contractor and the CJ program office.

Questions:

How long have you been working with the Community Jobs Program?

How many Community Jobs participants have you hosted at this worksite?

What kinds of jobs have they performed?

Have you been happy with their performance?

What sorts of problems arose and how did you deal with them?

Did you need support from the CJ contractor in resolving these problems, if so did you receive adequate support?

Please tell us about your relationship with the CJ contractor (including orientation to the program and its participants, training, support, and frequency of communication).

Do you offer training aside from the day-to-day work at the site, if so please describe the training?

How well do you feel CJ prepares individuals for unsubsidized employment?

Do you feel you benefit from the work of the CJ participant?

Would you hire this individual, why or why not?

What are your overall impressions of CJ – what is working and what is not?

How would you improve the program?

Community Jobs Participants

Goals: To evaluate program quality as well as perceived effectiveness of the Community Jobs program.

Timeline and Process: Participants in two of the local communities hosting Community Jobs participants will be involved in the focus groups. At each of these sites, the local Community Jobs contractor will be asked to convene a group of 5-10 CJ participants who have been actively involved in the program for at least one month. A 2 hour focus group will be convened, in the contractor's offices if possible, or in other space arranged by the contractor or the evaluation team.

Contractor staff and Community Jobs staff will not participate in these sessions. The participants in the meeting will be the evaluation team, consisting of Paul Sommers of the University of Washington and Annette Case of the Economic Opportunity Institute, plus the CJ Participants. All of the discussions at these meetings will be kept confidential; that is no specific names will be communicated back to the local contractor or the CJ program in Olympia. A summary report reflection the evaluation team's summary of the major issues raised in the discussions will be drafted and sent to both the local contractor and the CJ program office, as well as included in the program evaluation.

Questions

How long have you been in Community Jobs?

Please talk about the events that led you to be in CJ (referral process)?

Please talk about your employment specialist

How often do you talk with them or see them

Are you comfortable talking with them?

Do you feel they provide you with all the support necessary to succeed in the program and obtain employment?

Where do you work?

What are you job duties?

Do you enjoy your work, does it match your interests

How do you feel about your supervisor?

Do you feel comfortable talking to them?

Do you feel supported by them in your work?

If there have been difficulties at your worksite does your employment specialist help you with them?

Has your employment specialist told you about training opportunities?

Have you participated in any type of additional educational, training, or activity on top of your work with CJ?

Would you want to work more hours or fewer hours?

Are there other activities you think would be more helpful, if so what are they and has your employment specialists talked about them with you?

Do you feel like this program is helping you in terms of gaining skills and good experience?

Do you feel like this program will be helpful for gaining permanent employment?

Has job search been helpful?

What do you like most about the program?

What do you like least about the program?

What would you change about the program?

Appendix F: Focus Group Attendance by Site

1. Walla Walla --- February 15, 2000

DSHS Case Managers: 5 attended

Worksite Supervisors: 7 attended

2. Spokane --- February 16, 2000

DSHS Case Managers: 12 attended

Worksite Supervisors: 6 attended

3. Chelan Douglas --- March 7, 2000

Worksite Supervisors: 10 attended

4. Pierce --- April 13, 2000

DSHS Case Managers: 13 attended

Worksite Supervisors: 8 attended

5. Bellingham --- May 10, 2000

DSHS Case Managers: 20 attended

Worksite Supervisors: 8 attended

Participants: 7 attended

6. Snohomish --- May 11, 2000

DSHS Case Managers: 8 attended

Worksite Supervisors: 6 attended

Participants: 5 attended

Appendix G: Community Jobs Scope of Work

This scope of work was developed by the Community Jobs Program, Office of Trade and Economic Development. The scope of work defines the program requirements for the CJ Contractors.

ACTIVITY/TASKS

Administrative/Management Development

Provide administrative and management of project
Establish participant payroll system and Management Information System
Track and monitor participants', employers' and contract components
Submit completed invoice including documentation of: Wages and Benefits, Support Services and Management Information System data by the 10th of each month
Market and outreach to local Community Services Offices, Work First Participants, Employment Security, Community/Technical Colleges and Non profit, Tribal and Government agency employers

Participant Engagement and IDP Development

Receive DSHS/Referral, Signed Participant Individual Responsibility Plan and Participant Employability Evaluation
Notify DSHS WorkFirst case manager of participant/referral status within ten days of receipt of referral
Engage and assess participants, to include but not limited to, skill level and workplace behavior
Identify barriers and develop plan for removal or reduction
Orient participant to Community Jobs program elements, including Wages, TANF disregards, program expectations and policies.
Initiate Readiness to Participate and/or Behavioral Management Services as needed
Negotiate job activity and worksite
Identify and initiate interpersonal and/or vocational training goals both on the job and off the job, including CTC, ABE, GED, ESL, etc
Develop & sign Individual Development Plan
Forward copy of Individual Development Plan to DSHS WorkFirst case manager

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Worksite Development and Participant Enrollment

Negotiate job activity and host work-site
Develop job descriptions for/with work site supervisors and participants
Sign Worksite agreements with participants, host work-site supervisor and Community Jobs Practitioner
Update training and support materials for/with host work-site employers
Establish each participant on payroll
Enroll participants and send WorkFirst case manager an Enrollment Confirmation form.
Provide frequent and regular contact with participant through intensive case management services

Participant 6 Months Benchmark, Review and update IDP or Early Completion Due to Unsubsidized Employment

Review, and update Individual Development Plan at six month bench mark
Document significant progress in Individual Development Plan goals
Participant completes "customer satisfaction" survey
Host work-sites/employers complete "customer satisfaction" survey
Encourage and support job search activities with/for participants throughout the remainder of Community Jobs assignment
If early completion due to unsubsidized employment refer to final payment point requirements

Completion of CJ program or Early Completion Due to Unsubsidized Employment

Complete Individual Development Plan goals
Assist in unsubsidized employment
Achieve satisfactory participant evaluation
Achieve strong level of community satisfaction

Community Jobs Standards

Participants File Contents
Participants file contents shall include but not limited to:

DSHS Referral Form
Referral Response Form
Enrollment Conformation Form
Signed Individual Responsibility Form
(participant and WorkFirst Case Manager/Social Worker)
Signed Individual Development Plan
(participant and Community Jobs practitioner)
Signed Work-site Agreement
(Participant, Community Jobs Practitioner and host site employer)
Participants Assessments

Support Services Log and Documentation

Monthly Attendance/ Activity Documentation
Copy of Time Cards
Monthly (or more frequent) participant evaluation

Emergency/Sick /Personnel Leave
Shall be made available to each Community Jobs Participant as follows

- 20 hours shall be automatically awarded on date of enrollment
- 8 hours shall accrue each month there after
- Any unused accrued leave shall not be paid out to the participant at the end of Community Jobs assignment

Monthly Status Reports
Contractors shall report status of each participant monthly to

- ***DSHS WorkFirst case manager, using locally agreed format***
- ***Community, Trade and Economic Development -Community Jobs***

Support Services

Contractors will provide support services such as assistance with transportation, work clothing and other work preparation expenses to enrolled Community Jobs participants (following DSHS guidelines) When exception is required Contractor shall request exception from CTED Community Jobs staff

Advanced Earned Income Credit

Contractors and partners are required to participate in the Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit program and encourage CJ participants to enroll

Community Jobs Participant Work Hours

All Community Jobs participants shall not exceed twenty hours per week on the job. Any request for hours to exceed twenty must have prior approval from CTED Community Jobs staff.

Host Work-site Visits

Contractor and partners are required to conduct monthly or more frequent site visits

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